

EXHAUSTIVE NOTES
ON
LONGER POEMS OF
To-day

(PARKER)

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KAMTA PERSHAD, M.A.,



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*Containing Biographical, Critical and Comprehensive
Introduction; Lives of the Poets with their charac-
ter, Diction, Style, Estimate and Criticism,
Explanatory notes; Historical, Classical,
Biblical and Mythological Allusions ;
Full Grammatical and Rhetorical
Notes and Explanations Etc.*

BY

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Renaissance and Scientific Discovery Etc.,*

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ROBERT BRIDGES

1. THERE IS A HILL.

—Robert Bridges was born in the Isle of Wight on October 25, 1844, and was educated at Balliol and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Afterwards he studied medicine, and was appointed consulting physician at the children's hospital, and physician at the Great Northern Hospital. He practised medicine until 1882, and thenceforward devoted himself wholly to literature.

He took to play writing, and his *Prometheus the Fire Giver* appeared in 1883, but it appealed only to scholars. *Nero*, a historical tragedy, was published in 1885, and in 1890 came out four plays, *Achilles in Scyros*, *Poliochio*, *The Return of Ulysses*, and the *Christian Captives*. Next he wrote *The Feast of Bacchus*, and *The Humours of the Court*, a comedy. *Demeter*, a mask, was written for the undergraduates at Somerville College, Oxford, and acted by them in 1904.

In 1913 Bridges was appointed poet laureate after the death of Mr. Alfred Austin. The next year he published his collected poetical works. An anthology of his poems compiled during the war became very popular. He wrote critical works on poetry, language, and pronunciation which are valued for their originality and learning. His important prose works are the two essays, *Milton's Prosody* (1893), *John Keats*, a critical essay (1895), and *The Necessity of Poetry*, an address published in 1918. In *New Verse* (1925), he resumed vigorously his experiments in verse. His

immortal poem *The Testament of Beauty* was published in 1929. He died aged 85, less than six months after the publication of this great work.

As a Poet—Robert Bridges began his work as a Victorian but he became essentially modern in form and spirit. He had absolute faith in God and had 'joy in love'. He had unimpassioned love for beauty in life as well as in Nature. The beauty of woman had a special charm for the poet but the striking note is always of loyalty and purity. 'The normal' condition of a full life ended for him in the divine unity from which love sprang. He subscribed to the creed that

*"Every gentle heart
That burns with true desire
Is lit from eyes that mirror part
Of that celestial fire."*

The serene shy and cultured mind of the poet kept aloof from the busy turmoil of life. The social problems of the day, and there onslaught on tradition and faith had no attraction for him. He loved to enjoy, like Wordsworth, the peaceful calm that prevails in nature, and expressed its quiet working in his poems. Like Keats he loved beauties in nature and adored them. His whole artistic creed and practical philosophy can be summed up in his own beautiful words—

*"I too will something make
And joy in the making ;
Although tomorrow it seem
Like the empty words of a dream
Remembered on waking."*

The nature-poetry of Robert Bridges takes for its theme the familiar scenes of English countryside. In the truthful presentation of the scenes he is more

homely and English than even Tennyson was. The countryside, the flowering bank, the June meadow, the winter hedges, and the weald stretching away from the foot of the hill, are made familiar to every reader of the poet in his *There is a Hill*. There he is merely content to describe, though he always displays a refined fancy and a broad philosophic spirit. His poetry here is purely descriptive, and yet it is suffused with a sense of mild joy and is permeated with the soft music of his bewitching verse.

His last poem, *The Testament of Beauty* has struck a new note in English nature poetry. The poet uses his beautiful nature passages for a purpose beyond mere description, and as an integral part of the content of the poem.

A strict sense of form and a desire for purity of outline characterize the poetic art of Robert Bridges. He wandered into by-paths of versification and expounded and defined the laws of English metre. His 'Account of Milton's Prosody' has created a new interest in the study of English verse. He has been successful in naturalizing classical metres in English. "Mr. Bridges' short lyrics, as a whole, are the most perfect work in pure prosody in magic of cadence, since Herrick, Carew, Drummond and other Caroline poets" (Harold Williams).

The Poem—Its substance.—The poem is the description of a beautiful hill on the bank of the Thames. The hill is evergreen with trees and their hanging branches sweep gently over the water. The current of the stream near the hill is swift, and in the middle of the stream there is an island covered with long rushes. The brink of the water is fringed with weeds, crowfoot, and various other flowers and plants. The shady bower on the hill is undisturbed by visitors. Except for an angler who now and then comes

a-fishing, or an occasional passer-by who treads his weary way across the forest on the hill, this charming spot is unknown to people. There is none to disturb the peace of the quiet bower. The poet refuses to reveal the situation of this lovely bower, lest it attracted visitors and curious persons and thus lose its sanctity.

Its Appreciation.—The poem is descriptive and at its end is enlivened by reflective and lyric touches. The poet is alive to all the natural beauties of the place. Such minute details as the sweeping of the boughs on the water, the little gem-like flowers on the ground, and the rich variety of water plants growing on the marshy bed of the river contribute to the reality of the picture. The natural description does not seem intended to convey merely a broad or general impression. The whole picture is realistic and convincing. The poet has a keen eye and creates his effects with the aid of minute touches. The spirit of silence gives to the poem a serene and tranquil tone. The quietness of this beauty spot is charged with beauty and sweet scent of flowers, and all these combine to "delay the loitering boat."

The last stanza of the poem gives it a new turn. The poet refuses to reveal the situation of the island. He wants no intruders there. The joys and beauties of the spot would be lost if the prevailing peaceful atmosphere is disturbed by strangers. One who enjoys poetry need not ask if there is really such a hilly bower by the Thames, or the whole picture is a mere idealization of the poets desire for beauty and peace. For the reader who has enjoyed this poem the little fairyland does become an imaginative reality.

We also note the word witchery of Robert Bridges in this poem. Such phrases as 'robbing the golden

market of the bees', 'white water lily spread with gold' or 'the gibbous moon grow bright' are real poetic gems. The poem is typical of Robert Bridges' poetic creed. The beauty of English landscape, the green drapery of nature alive with all its gentle murmur, of the even-flowing stream, the silent grazing cattle on the meadows—never fail to arouse in us poetic feelings of beauty, joy and peace. He is one of the modern English nature poets in whose poems passages of pure natural description abound.

Versification.—Each stanza consists of eight lines. The first four lines constitute a quatrain, each line being on iambic pentametre. Then follows a couplet of iambic trimetre. The last but one line is again in iambic pentametre followed by an iambic trimetre. The rime arrangement is *ab ab cc bc*.

THERE IS A HILL

Notes.

Page 1.

Stanza 1. The silver Thames—The white stream has often been called 'silvery' by poets. Sir Philip Sidney wrote in his *Arcadia*: "There were hills which garnished their proud heights with stately trees; humble valleys, whose base estate seemed comforted with the refreshing of silver rivers; meadows enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers; etc. . . .". **Shady**—thickly wooded. **Birch**—it is a hardy forest-tree, with smooth white bark, and very durable wood. **Beech**—a common forest-tree with smooth silvery-looking bark, and small edible nuts. **Odorous pine**—an ever-green cone-bearing resinous tree, furnishing valuable timber, and giving a pleasant odour when burnt. **Underfoot**—under one's feet. **Thousand gems**—innumerable blossoms of varied

colours. **To his floods decline**—slope down towards the river bank. **Pecedent branches**—branches hanging downwards. **Trail their foliage fine** **watery face**—the low hanging green boughs and leaves move with slow sweeping motion on the surface of the river.

Explanation. In this opening stanza the poet describes the secluded hilly bower which is the subject of the poem. The hill lies on the bank of the sparkling Thames and is covered over with birch, beech and sweet-smelling pine. It declines rather abruptly towards the river. The slopes are overgrown with thickets. The ground beneath these thickets is covered with numberless beautiful flowers. The tops of tall trees growing there intertwine and their hanging branches sweep the surface of the river with their leaves.

Stanza 2. Sweltering pasturage—Meadows where the atmosphere is languid on account of excessive heat. **Alert to seek** **shade**—ready and eager to find out the cool refreshing bower. The poet imagines that the river is flowing swiftly in order to avoid the excessive heat and seek refuge in the cool shade of the bower. **Pictures his gentle purpose**—shows clearly the earnest desire to seek the wholesome bower. **Caverned pool**—the deep pool. **His toil has made**—the hollow which has been made by the current of the river. **Stout roots**—thick knotty roots. **Lay bare**—expose to view. **Have played** . . . **hair**—have passed through the grassy vegetation growing profusely on the river bank. **Fibrous hair**—plants growing on the bank are compared to hair through which the water passes and gets cooled.

Explanation. The swift stream of the Thames flows rapidly from the hot meadows, as if eager to reach the refreshing and cool deep pool which has been hollowed out by the current. In winter the stream

becomes narrow, lying bare the roots of the trees growing on the river bank ; whereas in summer the water gets cool while passing through the vegetation growing on the bank.

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Stanza 3. Rushy—Over-grown with rush, a water-side plant with naked, thin, tapering, pithfilled stem. **Guards**—the island near the bower is imagined to be a sentinel. **Sacred**—because this beauty spot, so calm lovely and peaceful is undefiled by intruders. **Lazy cows**—grazing at ease. **Wrench flower**—tear off violently the sweet-smelling flowers from plants. **Robbing the golden bees**—destroying the flowers from which the bees collect honey. This line describes in a vivid and poetic manner a common sight. It produces a colourful and picturesque effect which only Spenser and Keats were capable of. Compare :

“And winking may buds begin

To ope their golden eyes.” Shak. Cym. 11.3.

Myosote—a genus of annual or perennial herbs bearing blue, pink or white flowers. The common blue forget-me-not belongs to this genus. From Gk *myos*—a mouse, and *otos*—an ear. **Laden barges**—boats full of cargo. **Flag**—a kind of plant with bladed leaves, growing on moist ground. **Golden flower-de-lys**—Iris flower.

Explanation. In the river by the side of the bower there is an island overgrown with tall rushes which intercepts the view of the bower from the meadow. On the meadow cows graze carelessly and tear off ruthlessly the golden sweet-smelling flowers, thus depriving the bees of their source of honey. Boats laden with cargo float drowsily when they come near the beds of myosote, and it seems, as if the sweet smell of flag and flower-de-lys arrests the speed of the boats.

Stanza 4. Eddies away—runs into a small whirlpool and its water moves forward. **Tangled** **mass**—confused thick layers. **Net the** **cool**—prepare a cool net for the fishes. **And scarce** . . . **pass**—almost completely choke the passage of the water. **Crowfoot**—a species of butter-cups. **Mars**—checks the growth of. **Drowning nenuphars**—the white or yellow water lilies, appropriately called drowning, as they dip into water. The word *nenuphars* is derived from the Persian *nilofar*. **Tassels** **grass**—tuft of soft grass. **Silver stars**—white flowers.

Explanation. Towards the bower where the stream runs in small whirlpools and passes on, the water weeds lie in a confused thick mass scarcely allowing fishes to swim through or water to pass. Near the bank in shallow water, the crowfoot with its soft grassy leaves and white flowers, grows so exuberantly that it checks the growth of the water lily.

Stanza 5. Spoked with gold—the bulb-like yellow part in the centre of a lily flower. Literally, the golden bar in the centre. **Loves the hollows**—grows and thrives in deep pools. **Broad shields** . . . **unfold**—bloom and spread its broad circular leaves on the surface of the water. **Waxen head**—grown top of the stalk where flowers appear. A. S. *Weaxan*, to increase.

Explanation. But in the deep blue water of the pool no plants grow. Even the water lily—the beautiful flower with its yellow stream—does not grow in the pool, though it generally blossoms and spreads its shield-like leaves in such waters. Its long stalks even if they were to take root in the pool, would not reach the surface as the pool is so deep and no flower would bloom at their tops.

Stanza 6. Angler—one who takes to fishing for pastime. **Hidden depths**—secluded deep waters.

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Pride of fishery—great interest in angling. **Curious fishes**—fishes curious to know what the bait is, without being afraid of being caught. **Nibbled bait**—the bait from which fishes have cautiously taken small bites. **Scornfully**—because they successfully escape from being caught.

Explanation. Sometimes an angler comes to the pool and dropping his rod in the deep waters leaves it supported against a tree, and himself remains absorbed in reading an interesting book. Soon he forgets his interest in fishing and is either lost in fine fancies or falls asleep. And then some fishes out of curiosity approach the bait, bite at it cautiously and some other scornfully avoid the bait and leap away or dive down.

Stanza 7. Ancient-fashioned smock—clad in old-fashioned loose garment like the child's overall. **Tottering care**.....**knees**—supporting his tired limbs carefully upon a stick because his steps were unsteady. **Fare**—pass. **Buried day**—forgotten past. **Across the**.....**stray**—flash accidentally in the mind. **Some perishing**.....**shadow**—some short-lived silent mental image of a person.

Explanation. Sometimes a solitary way-farer clad in an old-fashioned smock, supporting his trembling and tired limbs on a wooden stick may happen to pass slowly by the pathway across the forest. The poet compares the solitary way-farer to a short-lived mental image of a person suddenly flashing in the mind and revive with it memory of long forgotten time. Just as the image passes away from the mind, so does the solitary visitor pass away silently without noticing anything in the surroundings.

Stanza 8. **Else**—except for the stray angler or the solitary way-farer. **Is safe**—will remain undisturbed. **Hot**.....**meadows**—the hours of the day when the meadow becomes oppressively hot. **Busy**.....**stream**—teeming with vapour which dims the transparency of the stream. **The gibbous moon**—the moon is said to be gibbous between the half and the full moon when both sides are convex. **Dance in a dream**—the moon beams falling on the rippling surface of the stream, when the whole atmosphere is silent, are imagined to be dancing. **Glorify the night**—light up the dark night and make it beautiful.

Explanation. Except for the solitary angler and way-farer the solitude of the place remains undisturbed. A lover of loneliness may go there and enjoy a bath in the stream ; or, if he likes he may take a refuge there with his sweet-heart when the meadow has become oppressively hot and the teeming vapours bedim the transparency of the atmosphere. If he likes he may after sunset repair to the bower and notice, with the fading daylight, the gibbous moon grow bright and throw her beams on the rippling surface of the stream beautifying the night by the bewitching light, as if dancing in a dreamy atmosphere.

Stanza 9. **Where is this**.....**Thames ?**—the poet after describing his favourite beauty spot tantalizes us by this question. **No sharer**.....**I allow**—the poet resolves to tell none where the bower is.

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Strange feet.....**defile**—people who have never been to the bower spoil the sanctity of the place by disturbing its solitude. **Burly**—sturdy. **Turn his prow**—bring his boat near the island. **Prow**—the front part of a boat. **Guardian isle**—the island

which stands near the bower guarding it against intruders by shielding it from their view. See Stanza 3.

Explanation. The poet is not willing to let others know the exact situation of the bower. Invoking the pool and the flowery thickets, the trees with fresh green leaves and stately stems, the poet resolves never to tell others where secret bower is. He is afraid that others knowing this beauty spot will spoil the sanctity of the bower by their visits. It is also likely that a strong and courageous boatman may some day direct his boat towards the island, which stands like a guard near the bower in the midst of the silvery Thames.

JOHN DRINKWATER

2. A LESSON TO MY GHOST.

Life.—John Drinkwater, the well-known poet, dramatist and critic was born at Leytonstone, Essex on June 1, 1882. He was educated at Oxford High School. He worked as an insurance clerk for twelve years and afterwards took to the theatre. He became manager and producer to the Pilgrim Players who developed into the famous Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

His first volume of poems was published in 1906, and his first play in verse in 1911. He has written many volumes of verse, critical studies on William Morris (1912), Swinburne (1913) and others, and numerous plays of which *Abraham Lincoln* was a great success on the stage in America as well as England. Among his later plays his "chronicle dramas" *Oliver Cromwell* (1921), *Mary Stuart* (1922), and *Robert E. Lee* (1923), were performed in London. In 1923 his *Collected Poems* were published in two volumes and in 1925 appeared his *Collected Plays*. His most important prose work *The Pilgrim of Eternity; Byron-A-conflict* was published in 1925. Three years later was published *Charles James Fox*.

As a Poet.—The most striking note of John Drinkwater's poetry is its intellectual tone. He is less at his ease in lyric than in elegiac, meditative and hortatory verse. His lyrics have a serious intention which distinguishes them from an unpremeditated song. His *Poems of Men and Hours* (1911) and *Poems of Love and Earth* (1912) embody his gravity and earnestness.

The opening prayer of the former has the high seriousness of poetry—

*"Knowledge we seek not—knowledge Thou hast lent,
But, Lord, the will—there lies our bitter need,
Give us to build above the deep intent
The deed, the deed."*

Several of his short poems have the same gravity and moral earnestness. We think of "John Drinkwater's poetry as of a healthy body ruled by a serene mind : its temper sane, its manner gracious, planned on noble lines which are shaping towards perfection by a rigorous discipline. And one likes to believe it peculiarly English. But there is something else ; and in the strength and persistence of that other quality one seems to come still closer to its origin in the puritan spirit of mid-England." "It is not for nothing that Mr. Drinkwater is a poet of Warwickshire, of delight in life, of keen sense-impressions and swift response to them, of gentle and homely scenes of nature, of hearty country folk, of friendship and of extravagant passion. He is an inheritor, and this fair body of his verse came out of the heart of England. Its qualities are specifically English. It has dignity, sweetness and nobility, but it has also pith, vigour and clarity. Its imagination is sunny. There are no mystical shadows haunting it, and it does not ever fly high enough nor deep enough to reach the outer darkness. Its imagery is bright and clear, so that even a thought is given the shape and stir of life." (Mary C. Sturgeon).

"John Drinkwater is a self-conscious artist. He pens his lines in the 'cold ink of thought' rather than in the 'red blood of a fired brain.' He suggests thoughts but rarely kindles the imagination or fires the passion. He is true to his own ideal of art. He told Theodore Watts-Danton that the measure of a poet's

greatness is to be judged not by the 'contents of his art' but by his art itself ; by the perfecting shaping of his vision and not by "the nature of his vision." It is no wonder then that Drinkwater thought that the secret of poetry lay in 'pregnant and living words.' He uses English with restraint. Thus his imagery shines not as a star or a flower but like a jewel, a priceless gem of art. As such the poems lose their emotional appeal. As Mr. Coulson Kernhan says, "He speculates, meditates, ruminates, but only rarely illuminates—other than as the glow-worm illuminates himself, and his own surroundings."

The Poem—Its substance.—The night is dark and the poet is surprised to find that on the adjoining hill no ghost is out for a walk. He, therefore, offers to send out his own ghost, although he is still alive. He instructs his ghost as to the route it is to take, the things it has to make itself familiar with, and the sights it has to see. He wishes that his ghost should become familiar with the surroundings and with the lovely hill in particular, because when the poet shuffles off his mortal coil it will be free from its fetters and will be walking in the vicinity. The present visit to the hill is to be a kind of a rehearsal of a part which the ghost will be required to play very soon. The poet sits by the fire-side watching the smouldering embers while he imagines that his ghost is walking on the hill, on the path chalked out for it by him. He remains in the strange reverie for some time until he discovers that the night is almost over and the beech-log in the hearth almost burnt out. He calls back his ghost from the hill, remarking happily at the same time that when he is dead his ghost will be walking in the midst of the familiar surroundings.

Appreciation.—The poem embodies a unique fancy

of the poet. He tries to imagine that the spirit can go out of the body even before their final separation. The poem strikes a peculiar note. This note is different from the lyric abandon. It is meditative and intellectual. The poet does not lose himself in a mood of ecstasy. He is not carried away on the wings of emotions. On the other hand he sits quietly meditating by the fire-side and weaves the fabric of his strange fancy in a quiet, grave and self-conscious mood.

The whole poem has a sombre air about it. The weird and sad elements are delicately woven together. The dark dreary hill, the cloudy sky, the loneliness of the place—all these naturally suggest to the poet and to every body else, the idea of ghostly beings. Then we hear a living human being instructing his own ghost to wander about in those solitary haunts. Naturally these arouse in us uncanny feelings and conjure up eerie associations. Then about the sad note. The very topic of the poem, the reference to the ghost, revive in us sombre feelings. Ghosts are invariably and inevitably associated with the idea of death, and then to add to this feeling the poet refers to 'the echoes and whispers' of all that was 'his bright will', suggesting that after his death the memory of his unfulfilled desires would be kept resounding in the air. This is clearly a tone of despondency which is infectious. Even the assurance at the end that he 'shall not sorrow' has a sense of helpless resignation about it.

This poem also shows us Drinkwater's method of treating nature. He represents nature with the help of a delicate mingling of light and shade. His treatment of nature also depends upon his mood, although we cannot say that like Wordsworth he idealises nature. In the present poem we find that

the very aspects of nature assume a gloomy appearance because the poem describes a despondent mood. Nature is to John Drinkwater a companion which must at least partially catch up the moods and fancies of its friend.

Versification.—The poem is not divided into stanzas, but the lines are arranged on the basis of alternate rhyme. The measure is anapæstic but there are occasional one or two extra syllables.

A LESSON TO MY GHOST

Notes.

Page 4.

Lines 1—12. **Wind's gone**..hill—the wind is blowing on the hill. **No ghost there**—and still no ghost has appeared. **The shape**—ghost. **Old-time**—long dead. **Pacing** **road**—strolling over the road on which probably the lover used to walk while alive. **The peacock tree**—there is no tree of this name. The poet explains the meaning in the following words. **Lady**—some imaginary body whom the poet refers. **Launches**—sends forth or throws. **Scattered** **light**—the rays of the moon fall irregularly on the ground as there are clouds to intercept them. **Dark silences**—silent places which are dark at night. **I will be a ghost there**—In such surroundings I will send out my spirit because no other ghost has appeared. **Living presence still**—though still alive. **Tight cottage walls**—closed within the narrow walls of a cottage, without the freedom of movement enjoyed by ghosts and spirits. **Stalls**—stables for horses and cows. **Wreathing**—twisting and curling.

Explanation. In the dead of night the wind is blowing fast over the hills. The poet feels it is just

the night for the appearance of supernatural beings. He is disappointed to find that no ghost—not even of a lover dead long ago to whom the surroundings are quite familiar—is found strolling on the up-hill road which passes the peacock tree, although the sky is cloudy and the moon sends forth beams that are diffused and fall on the dark spots below. The poet then decides to send out his own ghost on the hill although he is still alive and sitting in his closed cottage by the fire from which the smoke is rising and spreading over the fields and farmyards.

Lines 13—16. **Rehearse his faring**—repeats his part for practice. **Before my bones are dust**—before I am dead and buried. **Bid it learn . . . wearing**—ask it to learn the part it will have to play after the poet's death. **Betimes**—early; in good time. **Sock**—light shoes worn by ancient comic actors. **Bids the clay good-bye**—leaves the physical body for good; dies.

Explanation. Just as an actor repeats his part for practice before giving a public performance, similarly the poet says that he will send out his ghost, even before his death, so that it may become familiar with the part it will have to play when the poet would die.

Lines 17--20. **Curls the night away**—passes the night coiling because of excessive cold. **Beams of . . . another**—the light of the lamp and that coming from the burning logs in the hearth mingle together.

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Walks—blows.

Explanation. These lines describe the prevailing silence all round, so that the poet's ghost may be tempted to come out and stroll.

Lines 21—24. **It**—the high road. **Calls**—invites. **Written hill**—the path appears in the moon-

light as a line drawn over the silent hills. **Ashes**—in the hearth. **Shall walk still**—for many many years after the poet's death.

Explanation. Now that it is night and there is perfect silence on the hill the poet asks his ghost to go out and take a walk on the zigzag road which appears in the moon-light like a line drawn over the hill; for in future years the spirit has to stroll there after the death of the poet. In the meanwhile he will wait watching the ashes in the hearth.

Lines 25—28. Window-latch—A wooden or iron piece to fasten a door. **Firm**—securely closed. **The wet tread**—makes no sound if tread upon. **Bru-shing**—by your feet while walking. **Rain**—drops of water. **Bramble**—a rough prickly shrub. **Hear no gate**—do not hear the sound of shutting or opening gates.

Explanation. These lines refer to the noiseless movement of the ghost. It can go out of the room though the doors may be securely fastened. Even the curtains do not move. Outside the cottage also the movement of the ghost is perfectly soft and noiseless.

Lines 29—32. Half-wit . . road—half of my consciousness is with the ghost on the road. **Your kingdom**—you will be perfectly free to roam about there. **Free you**—from the bondage of the body. **Body's wit**—consciousness of the earthly existence. **Least**—though in which hounds or coursing dogs are held. **Goad**—spiked stick used for urging cattle. **When body's goad**—after death when the consciousness of earthly existence or physical body neither prevents the ghost from strolling, nor urges it to wander about.

Explanation. Although the poet is intently looking at the fire in the hearth, yet his thoughts are with

the ghost on the road—the road where after his death the ghost will be perfectly free to wander about. After the death of the poet the spirit would be liberated and will no more be controlled or guided by the body.

Lines 33—36. Peacock branches—see line 5. **Proudly gliding**—refers to the soft quick movement of the ghost. **Your own**—the poet addresses these words to himself. **You**—the ghost. **Riding**—climbing. **Sleep**—remain undisturbed.

Explanation. Now the poet sees through his imagination his ghost going out moving smoothly and noiselessly looking at the sky and the earth.

Lines 37—40. Dark—because as if they cannot see. **Great for divining**—can easily look into the mystery of things. **Brood on**—rest on for a long time, as if intently gazing. **Valleys of wood and plough**—cultivated and wild valleys. **Silver**—white. **Cherry**—a tree that bears a small bright-red fruit. **Holly**—an ever-green shrub with prickly leaves, small green flowers and red berries.

Explanation. The poet imagines that the dark yet penetrating eyes of the ghost fall on the valleys covered with woods and fields, and rest there. And the ghost himself remains standing where the white flower of cherry shines against the dark back-ground of the dark holly.

Lines 41—44. Rehearse—learn by practice just as an actor recites his part before giving public performance. **Remembrance of will**—the memory of my past hopeful desires. The will is called bright because of a living person. Just as the ghost is merely a shadow of the living, so the desires of the living become a mere memory with the ghost. **May**

rest—may await the arrival of the ghost in future.
Yet—even now.

Explanation. The poet asks his ghost to repeat the story of his past hopes and desires when it happens to pass by the bushes, so that a faint memory of these hopes and desires may linger there and receive the ghost, who is even now on the hill, when finally it goes there again after the poet's death.

Lines 45—48. Boom—the red blossoms of the primrose are to be seen on the meadow. **Cowslip**—a beautiful and fragrant species of primrose. **Starry**—because covered with flowers. **The cowslips . . . clad**—the flowers of the cowslips give the meadows a semblance of the starry skies. **Learn**—make yourself acquainted with. **So**—so that ; in this way. **Coming again**—after the poet's death.

Explanation. The poet advises the ghost to make itself familiar with the beautiful surroundings and the flowery meadows; so that when it returned to those haunts on the poet's death it might be with the feelings of a lover and not a stranger.

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Lines 49—52. Inn-sign—the sign-board being in front of an inn. **Windless watches**—quiet hours of the night. **Shadowy**—indistinctly visible. **Hawthorn**—a shrub much planted for hedges and for ornament; also called *haw*. **Hawthorn catches . . . not its own**—the bushes appear in forms, different from what they would actually look in day-time.

Explanation. The poet describes another night scene which he supposes his ghost to visit. In the windless silent hours of the night the sign-board of the inn being undisturbed. The ghost passes by the heaps of stones which are only dimly visible under the

shadow of the walls near the hawthorn bushes which seem to assume different forms in the moon-light.

Lines 53—56. **Cress**—a species of plant growing in moist places and having pungent leaves. **Crest**—top. **Lych-gate**—the covered gate leading into a church-yard where the bier is placed before a funeral to await the clergymen. *Lych* is derived from an old English word meaning 'body' or 'corpse'. **Cider-press**—presses for crushing cider and extracting juice. **Cider**—a drink made from apples.

Explanation. Now the poet instructs the ghost to wander about at all places near the cresses growing beside a pool on the top of the hill, between the lych-gate and cider-presses, over the meadow and near the wall.

Lines 57—60. **My heir**—it is a fine, very appropriate description of the ghost, as it would be the poet's successor after his death. The ghost will embody the poet's hopes and desires. **My body . . . fall**—the poet must die and be reduced to dust. **Heed me ghost . . . sorrow**—if the ghost wants to do the poet's bidding and familiarize itself with the beautiful surroundings, the poet would not be unhappy to part with life when the time of death comes. The poet would be able to enjoy the beauties of nature even after death through his ghost. **Learn it all**—these words express the poet's love of beauty which love will continue even after his death.

Lines 61—64. **Beech log's ended**—the beech log which was burning in the hearth when the poet's reverie began, is almost consumed to ashes. It indicates the time the poet has been thinking of his ghost and its wanderings. **Half-wit's drowsy**—the fancy, which was out with the ghost is tired and feels sleepy. See line 30, 'my half-wit travels.' **Doctrine done**—the

poet's imagining the temporary separation of his spirit from the body even before his actual death, is over. **Come home**—come back to the body. **Befriended**—familiar. **My moon**—it is supposed that spirits and ghost are abroad only at night specially on a moon-lit night. **When I leave the sun**--when the poet is dead and buried.

Explanation. The poet's reverie is now coming to an end, as it is late hour in the night and the beech-log is almost completely reduced to ashes in the hearth. The strange fancy of imagining the spirit separated from the body and wandering about has also come to an end. Perhaps the strolling spirit is also feeling sleepy. So the poet asks the ghost to return from the road to his body. The poet, in conclusion, consoles himself with the idea that after his death and burial when he would still be able to wander among the beautiful and familiar surroundings on moon-lit nights.

ROBERT NICHOLS

3. NIGHT RHAPSODY.

Life and Work.—Robert Nichols, English poet and dramatist was born on September 6, 1893, at Shanklin in the Isle of Wight. He was educated in the manner usual to an English boy born in easy circumstances. But what he learnt in youth was chiefly due to private, voracious and indiscriminate reading. In due time he went up to Trinity College, Oxford. He wrote his first poem when he was seventeen. While he was at Oxford the Great war began. In October 1914 he became a second lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery. He saw service on the Belgian-French border, was wounded and remained in hospital for five months. After his recovery he was employed in the Ministry of Labour and then on the British missions. From January 1921 to March 1924 he occupied the chair of English literature in the Imperial University of Tokyo, Japan, a position held formerly by Lafcadio Hearn. In 1922 he married Norah Denny. For two years he was at Hollywood where he worked with Douglas Fairbank, the famous film actor, and was employed to visualise scenes for him.

Robert Nichols has published three volumes of poetry—*Invocation* (1915), *Ardours and Endurances* (1917), *Amelia* (1920); there plays—*Guilty Souls* (1922), *Twenty Below* (1927), *Wings over Europe* (1928). He has been busy for several years on a modern tragedy with a far-Eastern setting. This, he says, is going to be his *magnum opus*.

Characteristics.—To understand Robert Nichols as a poet it will be best to quote some extracts from an auto-biographical sketch. He writes: "The chief influences upon me have been Jefferi, Keats, Rolland, Vaughan, Dostoievesky, Pascal, Amiel, Shakespeare, Mozart, Chebbor, Buchnier, Unanuno, and above all Goethe. Goethe in fact has changed my entire attitude to life and my development as artist".

"I am entirely opposed to the extravagant subjection fashionable to-day. Holding, as I do, that the syllabic dance is the foundation of poetry in England and the United States. I am likewise the enemy of all arrivisine in the arts, for I hold the practice of art to be one of the most serious and arduous of all callings. There are, I believe, no 'rules' in art, but, I hold, traditions valuable as declaring some of the proved peculiarities of a given medium. My works have the appearance by modern 'standards' of being 'old-fashioned.' I am content it should be so. In one hundred years time the 'moderns' too will appear 'old-fashioned.' But as I have put, I believe some of the elements of a particular vehement being into my works, so, I believe, they return these elements to the general life."

Substance of the Poem.—The balm of sleep is not the only gift of night. If we keep awake the stillness of night induces in our minds poetic fancies and gives rise to beautiful ideas. The poet hears no sound at night yet he imagines the world constantly revolving and there by producing a music audible to supernatural beings. Then he himself seems to hear the continuous rustle of the revolving earth like a sailing ship. It is also a joy to feel completely isolated from the world at night and calmly lose oneself in deep thought and become oblivious of one's own existence or realize the immortality of the soul,

when the material world has completely vanished. Then the poet feels that he is outstretched on the arms of a huge cross, as if expanding to infinity, and his soul appearing like a spark in the middle.

Then to keep awake at night is to feel the ecstasy of dissolving one-self in the darkness and fragrant air. Man is comforted and soothed and his wails of earthly life are thus silenced and he feels protected by divine solicitude.

It is in the dark stillness of the night that nature's mysteries are unfolded and its beauties revealed. It is in the deep silences of night that man can have glimpses of infinity and seems to transcend his limitations.

Appreciation.—As the poet calls this poem a rhapsody it is an irregular and emotional piece of composition. The poem is conceived in a lyrical mood, but at the same time it combines the charm of a descriptive poem. The poet lying awake at night exults in the prevailing silence all round and projects his soul in the infinite space experiencing strange ecstasies. The ideas are at times fanciful but the descriptions are so realistic that image after image following in quick succession lifts us out of ourself. The poet opens his mind and feelings to the variety of influences which the night has upon his alert imagination. At times he seems to transcend the limitations of earthly experiences and soars to heights of mystic realms. The glimpses of the infinite that he catches are wisely communicated by suggestions only, and no attempt is made to describe them. This helps in creating a mystic atmosphere for the poem.

The prevailing darkness of the night has narrowed down the choice of objects that the poet can

describe, yet the descriptions are convincing and beautifully worded. What strikes us most is, however, the yearning of the soul for the infinite and the successful attempt of the poet in his imaginative flight to the regions of consciousness, ordinarily beyond our reach. It is a beautiful idea of the poet when he imagine himself expanding into a huge cross with his soul as a spark in the middle. Another idea which we like to dwell upon is of those ecstatic moments, so rare in life, when deeply engrossed in meditation we feel the weary weight of this world suddenly disappearing and even our consciousness of physical body vanishing into nothingness and the illuminated soul pervading everywhere. The poet's mystic and religious ideas are beautifully brought out in these passages.

The poet is a conscious artist. The poem is characterised more by the weightiness of thought than by lyric abandon.

NIGHT RHAPSODY.

Notes.

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Stanza 1. Rhapsody—An irregular and emotional piece of music or composition. **Reigns the silence**—when the whole world is charmed into complete silence. **Reigns**—prevails. **Absolute**—complete or perfect. **Tilted**—inclined. **Axle-true**—the axis of the earth. **Gyration**—rotation. **Sensible**—audible. **Unimagined beings**—beings whose existence we cannot easily imagine ; supernatural beings. **Incorporeal**—without physical body. **Stretched**—lying.

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Vigilance of ecstasy—watching joyfully. **Ethereal paths**—heavens. **Celestial maze**—circuitous paths of

the revolving and rotating planets. **Unless to ears . . celestial maze**—the music produced by the revolving earth is not audible to human ears. But it may be audible to supernatural beings who possess no physical body and who are always joyfully watching the circuitous path of the planets in heavens. **Rumour**—imagined sound of the revolving earth. **Onward course**—the movement of the earth. **Study rustle**—the poet imagines to hear the imaginary sound. **Darkling**—in the dark. **Ere-constant**—never changing, because the path of the earth is also fixed. **Swept lovely**—moving forward in a beautiful manner.

Explanation. The poet describes the peculiar fascination which he feels for the mysterious and silent charms of the night. It is pleasant, he says, to wake up late in the night when everything is shrouded in darkness and silence, and to feel that world is moving slowly on its axis, although no sound is heard except probably by the unearthly unsubstantial creatures or by beings lying in wrapt its extreme joy in the winding paths of the heavenly bodies. As the imagination of the poet grows warmer he feels that he can hear the continuous rustle of the rotating earth which sounds like the movent of a mysterious ship sailing full sail, smoothly and silently, in the dark at the dead of night going forward to mysterious regions constantly helped by favourable winds.

Stanza 2. Embalmed with—covered with. **Watchful, sweet and still**—darkness is giving an impression of wakefulness. It is sweet as well as calm. **Brain's mood**—the inclination of the poet's mind. **Flattered**—taken up. **Swim of currents**—smooth motion. **Circumvolent in the void**—rolling about in the open air. **Dim light skies**—subdued light of a dark night. **Nocturnal skies**—the skies in the night. **Dim earth**—because of the night. **Beyond**—

outside. **Window-ledge**—narrow horizontal surface projecting from the wall at the foot of the window. **Isolate from the universe**—cut off from the outside world, which in day time is quite familiar. **Turns without**—revolves outside the room in which the poet is lying awake. **To brood apart**—to meditate separating yourself from the revolving world. **The spirit sinks**—the man forgets himself and becomes oblivious of his own existence. Becomes completely absorbed in thought. **Scarcely knows whether self is**—almost becomes unconscious of his own existence. **Self only is**—or the world and his own physical existence is completely forgotten and only the consciousness of the all-pervading soul remains. **For ever**—it is a state of consciousness from which the poet would not like to lose any time. He would like to continue for ever in such a state of mind.

Explanation. The poet finds it extremely pleasant to wake at night which is dark and gives a sense of wakefulness, sweetness and calmness, while the mind is occupied by a peculiar mood imagining the currents rolling about silently in the open air, caused by the rotation of the earth. The poet likes to lie quietly in his chamber practically cut off from the outside world dimly lighted at night, and revolving in its course. He is happy to lose himself in deep meditation enjoying calmness of mind till he becomes forgetful of his own body on account of absorption, or till it seems to him that the whole material world has vanished and the self alone remains.

Stanza 3. Room grown strange—the familiar room appears strange at night because of his peculiar mood. **Live a century**—when we are completely absorbed in thought we lose time sense. **Dripping turns**—there is perfect silence and an impression that time is moving slowly prevails. **Dripping**

—the sound of the oozing of water drop by drop ; hence it conveys the sense of slow, easy movement. **Dewy silent deep**—an appropriate description of the world at night outside the poet's window. **To feel dilate**—to feel as if he is expanding in dimensions. **Within the press**—under the pressure of ecstasy. **The conflict**—clash of feelings. **Heavy pulse**—deep flow.

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In-communicable sad ecstasy—a peculiar mystic feeling mingling joy and sadness and which cannot be communicated by words. **Growing**—refers to the feeling of expansion. **The body seems crucifixion**—The poet's body expanding and appearing as if crucified on a big cross. **Pointing void**—stretching from one end of the space to another. That is, the arms of the cross stretched over the whole space. **While the heart spark**—the poet's heart is reduced to a small spark in the middle of the cross—as contrasted with the expended body.

Explanation. It is pleasant, the poet says, to wake at night when it is silent and sweet and when his room assumes a peculiar appearance. He would go on living thus for a century, while silence prevails and time seems to move smoothly and slowly. In such a night when the poet looks out of his window and sees the vast silent and dewy atmosphere outside. He feels like expanding under the pressure of a peculiar feeling, a mixture of joy and sadness, the deep flow of which makes itself intensely felt. The feeling of expansion grows until the poet imagines that he is outstretched, on the arms of a huge cross, the arms extending from one end of the space to another, and his heart, in comparison with his enlarged plupical self remains like a little spark in the middle of the cross.

Stanza 4. Thou holdest—are in thy gift. **Feet dissolved**—lose themselves in ecstacy and mingle with. **Spice**—scent. **The peaceful spice of darkness**—it is only a poet's privilege to imagine any fragrance in darkness and then describe it as peaceful. **Ethereal flowers**—stars. Another happy picture. **That mist thy fields**—cast a dim silvery light upon the sky at night. **Happy wounds**—the wounds are called happy because they are not deprived of the healing influences which remove them. **Conditioned . . . humanity**—which are caused by our very birth as human beings in this world. The wounds are inevitable as man cannot escape suffering. **Slow sweet sighs**—sighs which escape our lips when we remember some loving object now lost. **Thou from the bosom**—sighs which escape our lips despite our efforts to control our feelings of sorrow. **Silent wails**—the unexpressed grief which we nurse in our heart. **The birth of eyes**—the flow of profuse tears which he tried to control so long, but ultimately could not be checked. **Hears**—has attuned his ears to spiritual voices. **Divine solitudes**—the anxiety of the night for the ministration of the wakeful man is called divine, because it soothes, consoles and heals our wounds like God's mercy. **With ineffable charged**—full of deep mystic significance. **Ineffable**—inexpressible; that cannot be described. **Charged**—fitted with; completely full of.

Explanation. The poet says that the night has in its power the gift of all blessings. But only for those who can be awake at night and can lose themselves in ecstacy of watching. The night will make them happy and blessed if they can completely lose themselves in the peaceful darkness and the sweet scented cool breeze blown from the silent starry skies over the dimly lighted earth below. Such soothing influences

have the power to console us in our miseries caused by the conditions in which we have to live our earthly life. We are fortunate that our wounds can be healed under such influences. Man is comforted, his painful sighs and wails are silenced, his uncontrollable profuse tears causing eye-sore cease, only if he makes in the middle of night and is able to feel the mysterious significance with which the entire atmosphere is charged and can hear the spiritual voices anxious for his ministration.

Stanza 5. In darkness yet more still—the poet imagines another night darker and more silent than the first one already described. **Save when**—the night is more silent except when. **Myriad**—numerous; countless. **Full-fledged boughs**—branches fully grown. **Perfumes wandering flood**—sweet scent moving from place to place with a quick. **Dispansion**—expansion. How it is an obsolete word and is seldom used in prose. **Dispansion . . . air**—it is not the sweet air which is blowing, but the scent which is causing the movement of leaves when it passes through them. **Furthest utter silences**—extreme silence. **Glimmering secrecy**—secretly under the glimmer of the stars. **Whisperings**—low sounds. **Scattered sighs**—soft irregular sounds heard in at different places. **To loose**—to give out. **Plunge and lapsing seethe**—the low murmuring sound of the falling of the waves.

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Star-thronged outer troughs—pools near the shore which reflect on their surface the numberless stars. **Rolls in**—moves with. **Wreath away**—combine with the circling motion of the form and drive away. **Flutter of the golden moths**—the movement of the yellow bright insects. **Star's**

one glimmer—the combined light of the stars.
Daggered—imprinted.

Explanation. The poet imagines yet another night darker and still more silent. The silence is unbroken except for the low, subdued rustle of the countless leaves on fully grown branches. But this rustle is not due to any gusts of wind, but is caused by the sweet scent which floods the whole atmosphere. The leaves, as the poet imagines, have stolen these low hissing sounds from the remotest and most silent places under the skies shining with stars. All these sounds combine and are then released in one continuous murmur and surge like a wave in the Pacific ocean which rises in some outlying pool and rolls with low full sound, combines with the foam and moves to drive away the yellow moths that are fluttering on the wet sand brightened with the mingled light of the stars.

Stanza 6. Loudening—imagination growing intenser. **Loudening with . . . boughs**—the loud rustle of the wind, passing through boughs, sounds like the dashing of the waves on the sea shore. This picture intensifies the imagination of the poet. **Gathers**—recalls. **Haunts . . . silence**—the most distant and silent places imagined by the poet. **The shades of sleep**—the sleepy places where drowsiness overpowers us. **Bear**—carry. **Summit of her wave**—the intensified imagination is compared to the top of a wave. **Beyond known shores**—the poet's quickened imagination brings before his mind scenes and places like which he had never seen in life. **Beyond the . . . terrestrial**—outside the reach of human thought; what normally we cannot think of or never can experience in life; imagination helps us to transcend the experiences of everyday life. **To hold me poised**—to keep me supported on the giddy heights of imagina-

tion. **The frontiers of infinity**—the outskirts of the finite world from where we can have a glimpse of infinity. **Full reflux**—full flow. **Bubble of solving foam**—short-lived like the dissolving foam bubble of foam. Such is human life. The poet compares himself to a bubble. **Other shores**—the shores of infinity; the existence beyond the mortal life. **Hovering instant**—for a very short time. At present he can have only glimpses of infinity. **Sustains**—supports. **Drawn back**—lose my mystic experience and return back to the hard realities of the work-a-day world.

Explanation. The poet's imagination becomes intense with the rustle of wind passing through leaves of the trees. He likens his imagination to the wave of sea dashing against the shore. His attention becomes wholly engrossed in the thought of the night and he feels as if his imagination, which carried him to the remotest places of deepest silences, was carrying him like a wave to unknown regions of mystic experiences. His imagination opens for him the vistas of the spheres unknown to human thought and beyond his experiences. He feels that he hangs balanced on the edge of the finite world from where he can have glimpses of infinity. He hopes that the next time the wave of imagination will carry him there with a greater force, but for the present he must be satisfied only with a glimpse. He compares himself to a bubble of water floating along the current of water. These distant shores of unknown regions of infinity which appear to him only in rare moments of mystic ecstasy have a permanent fascination for him. But he must wait for the proper time to reach there and till then he must return to the dull routine of his daily life.

LAURENCE BINYON

4. UNSATED MEMORY.

Life and work.—Laurence Binyon, a poet and art critic, was born on August 10, 1869, and was educated at St. Paul's School, London, and Trinity College, Oxford. At Oxford he won the Newdigate Prize in 1893 for his poem *Persephone*. In the same year he published a few poems in *Primavera* which are not remarkable. He entered the British Museum in 1893 as Assistant Keeper in the Prints Department. His *Lyrical Poems* (1894), *Poems* (1895), and *The Praise of Life* reveal no advance of poetical powers. His first distinction was achieved in the two parts of *London Visions* (1896—99) which were subsequently published as an enlarged edition in 1908.

In his Odes (1901), however, he showed a higher inspiration, for *The Dryad*, *The Bacchanal of Alexander*, *Amasis*, and the third part of *The Death of Tristrum* are finely conceived and impassioned poems. In 1903 appeared *The Death of Adams and other Poems*. *Dream come True* (1905) contains a collection of formal and metaphysical love lyrics. In 1905 he published *England and other Poems* of which *Sirmione*, *Ruan's Voyage* and *Milton* stand with the best of his works. Clear passion of true poetry is to be found in *The Four Tears* (1919).

Binyon is a pioneer in as much as he restored blank verse drama to the modern stage. *Paris* and *Oenone* were performed in 1906 and *Atilla* appeared in 1907. In 1925 *Boadicea* was staged. His selected poems were published in 1927 with the title of 'A Laurence Binyon Anthology.' Himself as an autho-

logist he will be remembered by his supplementary Fifth Book added to the original Golden Treasury.

Characteristics as a Poet.—If there had been a perceptible gap between the Victorian Age and the present century the poetry of Laurence Binyon would be the bridge to span it, for he has always been equally found in the old and the new. His first volume, *Poems* (1894) carried us invariably back to Arnold, to clough, to Wordsworth, to the lyrists of the Restoration; the *London Visions* written in the following year, were new both in subject and in treatment. In the poems published from 1898 to 1906 the method adopted was to set forth the thought and feeling of the man of to-day in imaginative pictures of the past. In the Odes 1900, and *The Death of Adam*, where his method is a great success, our pigmy and complex life seems to be magnified and sublimated by the vast all-pervading influence of the heroic and even the primeval world. The volumes of poems which appeared from 1913—1919 are the constant evidence of a beautiful mind.

The genius of Laurence Binyon is essentially lyrical, but his lyricism is dreamy, vague and sometimes inspired by life but more often by literature. His *Porphyryon* (1898), which made Mr. Archer declare that Binyon was an epic poet, is a narrative poem of fifteen hundred lines. The subject is that of many a youthful poem—an allegory of the soul's quest. A young man of Antioch, fascinated by the principle of Christian asceticism flies to a desert, but a vision of magical beauty changes his nature and he returns to the world in quest of ideal lowliness. The poem has a human touch, and there is a striking note of spontaneity, and its narrative blank verse alone cannot make it a successful epic. The clear passion of true poetry is also to be found in such poems as

the Odes, in a few pages of *London Visions* and *England*, and in the poems inspired by the war and collected in the volume *The Four Years*, 1919.

But Binyon's poetry has not the constant note of unpremeditated and unconscious song. He gains his ends consciously and deliberately. His limitation is that he is seldom passionate and never less than serious. He has complete power of imposing a lofty mood and resolving the problems and miseries in his peculiar way. But he is great only when he is away from life and realistic descriptions, and writes poems like *The Threshold* in the form of an ode, or becomes purely subjective and lyrical, as in *Trafalgar Square*. Poems such as *White Chapel High Road* and *The Road Menders* which aim at realistic effects are eyeless laboured monotonous. He is therefore more the poet when he departs from everyday life to kingdoms of myth, mysticism and pure imagination. His poetry combines the qualities of consummate scholarship, cultivated taste and fine æsthetic sense. In sudden and unexpected surprise of thought and phrase, in picture-making quality of his words, and in the wealth of imagery he is hardly second to any of his contemporaries. Like Pater, the academic æsthete, Binyon keeps aloof from a large field of common life, habitual, hideous, sordid or rebellious. But his method has its own justification. "That which a man may learn in solitude is not knowledge but wisdom, as wisdom is not of this or that, but of the nature of things."

Substance of the Poem.—The poet is half awake how a deep sleep in which he saw a splendid vision in dream. While he is yet between the state of sleep and wakefulness he craves to return to the dream-land again and is sorry that the beautiful vision should have been snatched away from him and he so ruth-

lessly thrust out of the dream-land. He hates this crude world of reality to which perforce he has returned. He does not remember the exact details of the dream yet its charm is still alluring him and he is vainly longing to have it again. The memory of the dream lingers but he can recall only vague impressions of it. The poet is loth to return to the consciousness of the wordly existence. He feels like a prisoner in life where day and night divide time. In the dream-land there was freedom not known in actual life. Freedom and joy were not measured there in terms of time or space. He laments as he is cast out from the dream-land where he cannot return. He realizes that the only real life is that of dream and imagination, and not of hard realities. And so he despises himself for the wasted efforts and worldly pursuits. Man has lost his true inheritance by forfeiting the true splendour of the soul. Reasoning and thinking have deprived him of his real freedom and glory; though even now he gets occasional glimpses of it. It is a pity that man enjoys so few moments of self-revelation which reveal to us the beauty pervading the universe. Life need not be so sordid as it has become only if we give proper values to things that ordinariness interest us.

Appreciation.—It has already been remarked that Laurence Binyon in writing poetry feels more at home when he soars in the realms of imagination than in dealing with the realities of life. In this poem he has chosen a subject which accords well with his genius. It is well-known fact that for a poet imagination is as real and palpable as the hard facts of life. He dwells in regions to which we can soar only occasionally and that too with the help and guidance of his own poetic productions. In this poem he has exalted the dreams and imaginings with there vision

of beauty and perfection over the facts and experiences of everyday life. For the poet the visions of beauty are not only more real but they are his birth-right and if for any reason he is deprived of them he naturally loses the zeal of life. This world is full of imperfections and man finds himself a slave to customs. The poet has a message for such worldly-minded persons whose ambitions and activities are confined merely to ordinary pursuits of life. They are losing an inheritance which is their birth-right. Only they should by their hearts open to impressions which we sometimes get in sub-conscious states of mind and while we are dreaming and our imagination is alert. In reading this poem we are often reminded of Wordsworth's Immortal Ode of which it is clearly reminiscent. There may not be much to flatter our sense of music in this poem but its philosophical and mystic appeal will not fail to strike even a casual reader. Some word portraits linger in our memory and we like to dwell upon them. 'The ticked hour is my jail; 'washing our sun-lit ignorance' are good examples of briefly but convincingly suggested pictures.

The poem has a fine message. The wordly man who has perhaps never realized what bliss the empty dreams and wild musings of a poet have in store for him. Even the pangs of longings, unrealised dreams and unsated memory vouchsafe those visions of beauty which no wordly possession can procure.

UNSATATED MEMORY.

Notes.

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Stanza 1. Unsated Memory—unsatisfied recollection. **Emerging**—awaking. **Unseal** - open. **Pursuing strangeness**—some strange scene which drives away from his memory the vision of the dream. It is to be noticed that the familiar world to which the poet wakes up is called strange, because he seemed the more at home in the dream-land. **O to be . . . was**—the dream-land. He longs to return to it, and is sorry for being awake. **Where the . . . not**—though he has only a very vague recollection. **Banished**—expelled forcibly. **Shrunken**—depressed. In the world of reality the poet immediately realizes his limitations. **Struck to**—suddenly made aware of. **Alien dawn's**—strange day. The world of reality appears strange to the poet immediately after the dream. **Blank peer**—the day or the world to which the poet wakes up is colourless and dull as compared with the dream-land.

Explanation. The poet falls in a deep sleep and visits a splendid world in a dream. When he wakes up he finds the vision gone and grows uneasy to find himself in the crude world. Like a stranger on the earth he longs for the dream-land. He is at a loss to recollect the precise situation of the glorious land, nor can tell the exact time when he was there, but he does remember that the place is far away from him and that he is a cast away on the earth where he feels like an insignificant creature. He is bereft of all happiness and the day-break seems to him altogether dull and strange as compared with the dream-land for which he is banished.

Stanza 2. Between two worlds—the world of the dream and the real world of ours. **Homeless**—be-

cause he has been banished from the one which loves as his home, and in the other he feels like a stranger. **I doubt of both**—because he is not yet wide awake. **Knowing that . . . have nothing**—he is only conscious of one thing that he has lost a splendid kingdom—that is, the dream-land; and has gained nothing instead. **Glimmering . . . daylight**—the world where the sun shines fitfully. The light of the sun in this world is dim when compared to the brightness of the dream-land. **The emptiness . . . overwhelms**—he is over-powered by the deadening effect produced by the loneliness in this world. **Still vision . . . crave**—just as a blind man longs for sight, so the poet craves for the vision of the dream, because that is more real to him than the actual world.

Explanation. The memory of the vision is fresh and powerful, and so the poet is not a fully conscious of the world around him. He is, therefore, in a doubt as to whether he belongs to the region of dreams or to the work-a-day world of ours. He has no other feeling except that he was in possession of worlds which are snatched away from him. In the world where he returns so un-willingly the sense of utter loneliness crushes his spirit. The memory of the dream-land haunts him, and just as a blind man longs for the restoration of eyesight, the poet craves to return to his dream-land and have the vanished vision again.

Stanza 3. Splendour . . . blood—an inward glory thrills the poet's heart. **Gleams**—flashes of joy. **Skiey largeness**—all-pervading greatness. **Closed and lost**—disappeared and lost for ever. **That memory . . . clutch**—the poet is at pains to keep the memory of the dream fresh in his mind. **Hungering unsated**—longing for and remaining insatiated. **Light of dreams**—extreme delight offered by the dream. **Pursued down**—followed up into. **Shadowy paths**—

because of the memory of the dream-land. **Foil—defeat. Lose me in a cloud....touch**—the poet is lost in the dreams and conjectures which he cannot realize.

Explanation. The memory of the vision clings to the poet with thrills of all-pervading joy which seems to have disappeared for ever. He longs for the sight of the vision and his memory is at pains to hold fast the fleeting images of his experience, but he is able to recall only vague impressions which strain his nerves, and engage him in such idle conjectures as he can never hope to realize.

Stanza 4. Fixed as in.....dim shape—the poet often repeats the idea that the objects of the world which he sees on waking up appear to him shadowy, and dim when compared to what he saw in the dream. **Accustomed thing**—familiar objects of everyday life. **An enmity at watch**—vigilant enemy. **For stale....escape**—dull routine of daily life; like a vigilant enemy, does not allow me to escape from this world into the dream-land of my desire. **In the dead light**—the common light of the day, which appears dull because of familiarity. **Apart and dead**—secluded and lifeless, as if having no great significance. **Menaces**—threatens. **The ticked hour is my jail**—the measured time, divided into periods circumscribes the freedom of spirit. The consciousness of time gives us a sense of one limitations.

Explanation. The poet is loth to return to the consciousness of the wordly existence and is happy in the life of imagination and dream alone. The familiar objects have a ghostly appearance as things encrusted with frost look dim. The familiar objects seem to be alive and, like an enemy, seem to lie in ambush to way-lay the poet and keep him in a lasting bondage, so that he may not escape into his dream-land. In

the common daylight, which brings clearly to our sight the naked loathsome reality every object appears dead and deserted but it exercises a pernicious blighting effect on the spirit. The consciousness of the swiftly ticking away time makes this earth a virtual prison where freedom of the spirited is considerably handicapped.

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Stanza 5. Sense—consciousness while dreaming. **Forge**—open fireplace for heating metals. **Blast**—strong breath of air. **Could fuse . . . flow**—melt this solid world into a shining liquid. **Flow of young power**—splendid youthful energy. **Streaming**—flowing continuously. **Dilated**—enlarged ; transcending the human limitations. **Feasting**—enjoying. **Vision**—dream. **Soul aglow**—soul full of joy. **Time a steed . will**—time like a tame horse perfectly under control. In the world time is a jail whereas in the dream it was like an obedient horse, helping the flight of imagination.

Explanation. The poet once felt extreme delight in the presence of a vision which was so pleasant that it could, like a gigantic furnace, melt the rigid world into the continuous flow of youthful energy ; but now he lies miserable in the arid facts of life. At one time he wandered over a vast region with a feeling of expansion and went into raptures over this experience in a dream. Then time did not limit his happiness or freedom of spirit ; on the contrary time was like a tame horse under his control helping him the flight of his imagination.

Stanza 6. Left at ebb—left behind by the retiring tide ; when the tide was full the weed was at the crest of the wave. **To pine . . . shrunk**—to waste away in grief, faded and contracted. **That had**

liberty . . . **foam**—which, before the tide was at ebb was floating on the crest of waves with unfaded brightness. **Trailing**—drawing along lightly on the surface of the water. **Rosy hair**—when the weed was fresh it looked rosy on account of the red filaments. **Long brine**—extensive sea. **So**—like the sea-weed left at ebb. **What haunted sea**—that dream-land which cannot be described.

Explanation. The poet pines for the world of his dram and is anxious to know the place from which he has been banished and thrown in this world. Once he had the freedom and happiness to move about the rosy realms of his vision, but now he is miserable and depressed like a castaway. The poet compares himself in his depression and loneliness with a sea-weed which enjoyed perfect liberty, to float on the extensive sea riding on the crest of waves, and to trail its fresh and rosy filaments on the surface of the water, but now at the ebb of the tide is thrown out on the dry seashore and has thus become faded and contracted.

Stanza. 7. An ocean of the mind—the poet's mind is imagined to be a great world in which one of the oceans is region of dreams. **Without access** **sleep**—which cannot be approached except through the zigzag paths of sleep. The varied images can be conjured up only, during sleep or dreaming time. **Main**—ocean. **Deep**—full of. **Memory of all memories**—all imagings, shapes, ideas etc. are gathered together in memory. **That ever lodged** **brain**—which ever occurred to the poet or occupied his mind even for brief moments. **Brief-living brain**—the impressions made upon our brain usually fade away very soon, unless they are stored in memory they cannot be recalled. **Washing**—purifying or removing the undesirable element. **Sun-lit ignorance**—the ignorance of the man of the world

of the higher reality or realms of imagination. **Was it this**—was that ocean the same as described above.

Explanation. In the last stanza the poet asked himself from 'what haunted sea' he had been cast up like a weed. In this stanza he suggests a reply. He is at a loss to bring back the exact image of the vision. It is perhaps a kind of sub-conscious state which can be experienced only in mysterious dreams. That state of consciousness is rich with the combined reminiscence of the innumerable thoughts and recollections of the past events that ever briefly flashed across the mind and disappeared for ever. This consciousness carries us to a real world and purifies the sordid pursuits of men in their daily life, just as a sea-wave washes the shore against which it strikes.

Stanza. 8. **Then miserable I**—if it is so then the poet has reason to deplore his life in the world. **Sucked dull oozeings**—drunk only the wearisome leakage. **Vanisheddews**—disappeared into misty moisture ; turned into insignificance. **Springs**—sources of true knowledge and joy. **Custom closes** **stone**—the conventions of society forbids just as a stone blocks the overflow of a spring. **Leaden fear**—apprehensions which dull our energy ; discouraging fears. **Clayey doubt**—the three obstructions to the free flow of a spring are—stone, lead and clay as mentioned by the poet. They represent respectively convention, fear and doubt as impediments to true knowledge and joy. **Obstruct**—choke up. **Heir of the earth's youth and of all it knew**—the poet considers himself a lawful successor of the unsophisticated joy and pure knowledge of man which he possessed before customs, fear and doubt corrupted him. **A vessel oblivion**—he is completely ignorant of them now.

Explanation. The poet grows unhappy at the thought that he has missed the real source of joy and wasted his time in such pursuits as like wearisome drinks which soon deprive him of all zest in life. The only real life is that of dream and imagination which the conventional ways forbid as idle, and the dreamer is looked upon with the eyes of fear and suspicion. And thus the real zest in life and true knowledge. One is choked up like the water of a spring by stone, lead and clay. The poet is reminded of his former greatness and bliss which was the lot of men when he earth was first created and men were unsophisticated and free from the yoke of meaningless customs.

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Stanza. 9. Native—inborn or indigenous. **There**—in the glories of creation which were fully revealed to him in dream. He was quite at home in the vanished glories of the vision. **Desires were lovely**—the cravings of heart were satisfied without the feeling of weariness. **The power uncreated**—when there was no consciousness of the passage of time and destructive changes it brings about **This numb air**—chilling influence of the worldly experiences. **Mapped days**—time divided into periods. **How pursuing hour**—time passing away swiftly. **Endless impediment and forfeiture**—an unlimited tale of suffering and loss.

Explanation. The moment of insight convinces the poet of his past glory when his desires were fulfilled without a sense of weariness and when the ravaging influence of time was never felt as time was not created. It was not divided into periods of varied length swiftly passing away. The poet, therefore, is a complete stranger in the world where life is brief and a tale of endless suffering and death.

Stanza. 10. Shrouded ourselves—ignorant of our real greatness. **Hide the soul splendour**—keep the soul away from its original glory. **Encrust thinking**—corrupt the spontaniety of the pure feeling by reason. **Then some us**—rare moments of insight reveal to us our true nature and make us conscious of our true greatness. **We are deified**—raised to divine greatness. **Feeling and seeing**—perception and imagination. **Gold gleams from the rust**—the real is immediately distinguished from the unreal in these rare moments of insight, just as gold is distinguished from rust. **Marvelling inheritance**—surprised at the enormous loss of greatness to which we are entitled as a birth-right.

Explanation. The poet says that we human beings move about in the world unconscious of our real self, and keep our soul away from its real glory, and corrupt our spontaneous, natural feeling with too much of reason. But even in this degenerated and fallen condition our real self is now and then revealed to us and this chance revelation raises us from the earthly plane and we are made demi-gods through perception and imagination. These rare moments of insight reveal to us at once the distinction between the real and the unreal just as gold is distinguished from rust. And on such occasions we are surprised by the sense of great loss that we have suffered in this world.

Stanza 11. Breathe beauty—the sense of all-pervading beauty comes to our mind. **Regale**—refresh. **Stint**—restriction. **Chartered sea**—sailing out on the sea of life without any restrictions. **Reason the rudder**—guided by reason. **Not the sky-filled sail**—our feelings and emotions do not become wild and uncotrollable, but are guided by reason. **Imputing hints**—indications. **Self-captivity**—the

fetters that are self-imposed, limiting the freedom of spirit.

Explanation. During the moments of self-revelation of which the poet speaks in the previous stanza, we are made aware of the beauty which pervades the universe, our minds are refreshed with innocence and we feel unlimited joy. Our life is like a ship on the wide ocean of the world and reason is our guide here, and not the feelings and emotions. Even in this state when we are slaves of reason, we retain some hints of previous glory and feel a kind of strangeness in this world.

Stanza 12. Vision of the old—A mental picture of old men. **Dear experience**—experience acquired from difficulties and sufferings. **Dear eyes**—their sunken eyes and wrinkled faces suggesting that they have acquired the experiences of life with sufferings and hardships. **Scarce a bold**—there is not the slightest indication of the youthful fiery spirit which emboldened before acquired their experience and reached old age. **That enterprise**—the last venture. **Engulphing dark**—death.

Explanation. The poet pictures forth before his mind's eye the figure of old men with their sunken eyes and wrinkled faces. They may be worldly wise and well-experienced; but they have paid a very heavy cost, as they have suffered great difficulties and have lost their youthful spirit. The fiery enthusiastic spirit which made them bold has entirely disappeared with their youth. The only thing suggesting life and strength in them is their rapid progress towards the dark abyss of death. The poet means to say that the worldly life is rewarded with the wasted youth and energies, whereas the life of those who dream dreams and live in the realms of imagination is happier and full of youthful vigour.

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Stanza 13. Stranded—Standing in shallow waters and unable to move. **Stir the mind**—excite our thoughts. **Unmemoried and mute**—without the power of recollecting past events and experiences and at the same time are quite speechless. **Have been** **fear**—have fearlessly braved many a storm. **Carried** **adventure**—undertook adventurous voyages in distant seas.

Explanation. The sight of old ships standing in shallow waters and their washed beauty and decay suggest deep thoughts to the poet's mind. The poet is reminded of the adventures which those ships, devoid of memory and speech, must have undertaken in distant lands and braved many a storm. But the poet fails to describe the beauties and glories of these lands where the ships met with their adventures.

5. STREETS.

Substance of the Poem.—It is evening and the poetess imagines herself going in the streets of a big city. Her purpose is to pluck strange fancies from the different parts of the city and to describe her impressions in a poetic form. It is a kind of imaginary adventure in 'the forest of the city' where she goes like a huntress, with the hounds of winds, in order to explore its secret mysteries. She knows the city very well. Its squares, parks, mansions and roads, are all familiar to her. What she desires is to receive impressions from them on this evening. In the little forlorn squares she finds dejected and depressed people sitting. There is no joy in them. The city parks are properly kept and look beautiful in spring. But the people for whom they are meant and who take their strolls there are not happy at all. Evening walks in the parks do not remove the wretched condition of the poor people. They may seem to be holidaying there but in their hearts there is no joy or merriment. The big mansions look gloomy like prisons because the big people living in them may enjoy luxuries but their souls are starved. Our possessions are our limitations. The rich people may be living in decorated and luxurious mansions but the human side of their character remaining undeveloped they are never happy or contented. They are proud money-grabbing persons who cannot be moved to pity at the sight of the poor miserable people.

But she likes the taverns where poor people amuse themselves and pass time merrily till the next morn-

ing and forget their cares and miseries. The miserable looking houses of the poor people also present a sight worth noticing, but their children, sickly and pale, fill her with a sense of horror as she realizes the tragic conditions of their lives.

All these sights make the poetess very unhappy. She describes the city as full of grief and pain. In apparently prosperous and densely populated cities you see the pitiful faces and slooping shoulders. Extreme poverty and starvation exist side by side with luxury and affluence. Hence she calls the city the 'beautiful mistress of grief' and 'mother of mutiny and want.' There is no peace and no silence. The poetess is so much troubled by these thoughts that she cannot enjoy sound sleep at night. The feverish activities, rush of streets even at night deprive her of sleep. The whole atmosphere is charged with the noise and din as people are struggling for existence, and are busy as if in an endless search. She feels bewildered and faded in such an atmosphere and closes the poem with a note of sadness.

Appreciation.—Miss Iris Tree in writing this poem has been inspired by an important problem which concerns the welfare of large populations in growing towns. Poets are often inspired by the beauties of nature and their personal feelings and emotions. But since man as such has begun to claim the attention of poets and writers new subjects dealing with social problems have also been treated in poetry. The spirit of democracy has influenced not only the social and political institutions but the songs of poets as well. They have pleaded eloquently for the redress of wrongs and injustices inherent in social arrangements and for improving the lot of poor people and mankind in general. The life in big cities and towns perhaps does not seem to offer a very inviting subject

for poetic treatment. But if the poet has a heart to feel and desires to express in poetic forms the seamy side of life in cities he will find ample material. This poem is conceived, no doubt, in a spirit of sadness, but it strikes a note which will encourage reformers and strike an echo in the hearts of those who instead of boasting of our present civilization discover in it blemishes which loudly call for removal. Only if we had the heart to feel we could easily realize the squalor, poverty and misery which lies hidden behind the magnificence of big towns, their growing population and apparant prosperity. It is a pity that the happiness of the people, the satisfaction of their simple daily wants do not receive the same attention from responsible persons as they deserve. All day and night a wail is rising to heavens from the multitude, but it does not move the hearts of people who can improve the conditions of living among the poverty stricken masses. Peaceful life of simple joys and contentment has become a thing of the past. We may be proud of our big cities and the civilization which has wrought them into existence, but we cannot claim that man is happier for all that or we have become more generously inclined towards our poverty-stricken countrymen. Miss Iris Tree has drawn this picture in her poem and one makes us feel sick and restless by it, if not actually ashamed of our much vaunted civilization.

The poem contains some fine pictures and descriptions are convincing. There is no attempt at over-drawing, because perhaps, it was not necessary. But the impression made upon the reader's mind is not merely of a good poem but of having awakened his moral conscience also by reading it. Some pictures are really fine. We may select one or two for example. "Those shadow figures trudging through the

grey. Like penitent souls through haunted corridors"; "streets shooting inquisitive fingers into chaos, piercing the night's remote divinity"; and the last beautiful lines—"More jaded than the Moon, more hopeless grey. Than that sad pilgrim lost amid the stars!" There are two lines at least which remind us the picturesque effects so often produced by Keats, and they are—

*"... through the crystal chandeliers of morning
Dew-prismed shone the sun."*

STREETS.

Notes.

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Lines 1—4. Alleys—narrow streets. **Forests of the city**—crowded city is compared to forests. We are reminded of Addison's remarks in his essay—**Mr. Spectators** return to town. **Hunting**.....
....dreams—the poetess continues the metaphor of forests in quest of ideas and thoughts. She gives out her intention of going up and down the roads and lanes of the city in quest of unusual thoughts and dreams, just as an adventurous huntsman goes in the forests in search of game.

Lines 5—8. Whistling..... **adventure**—invoking dreamy thoughts. Just as a huntsman sounds his horn, so the poetess will whistle while going in quest of poetic thoughts. **Plucking**.....
fancies—gathering ideas and poetic thoughts. **Where they**.....
peer—wherever they hide and peep. **Casting them away**—exposing them. Express them in her poetry.

Explanation. The poetess says that her mind will run over all the objects in the streets and will

conjure up strange uncommon thoughts. She will open her mind to all sorts of suggestions, however remote and curious, and express them in poetry.

Lines 9—16. Dusk—The time is evening, and she imagines darkness to gradually pervade the city, **Loitering**—moving about leisurely. In England there appears to be a longer interval between sunset and the darkness of the night. **Leaving**—dusk leaving behind in its march. **Smoky clouds of shadow**—dim patches of darkness. **Hovering clouds of peace**—dusk also leaves behind in its march a dark peaceful atmosphere. Due to darkness places appear to be restful. **Her**—dusk. **Race the winds**—the advancing darkness is followed by winds. **Whining to the scent of darkness**—the hunting scene is continued. Winds are compared to hounds which follow Dusk, the huntress, utter a wild shrill cry. **Scent**—chase followed by the scent.

Explanation. It is evening time and darkness is gradually spreading over the city, leaving a peaceful atmosphere behind it. Lamps are being lit. Darkness is followed by high winds which scatter dust all round. The poetess has compared the winds to hounds and dusk to a huntress.

Lines 17—18—Hunter jungle—this metaphor is repeated again. The city compared to a forest and the poetess, hunting for ideas and suggestions, to a huntress.

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Exploring mysteries—this is her game. She wants to disclose certain aspects of city life which usually remain unnoticed.

Lines 19—31. Moaning highways—the picture that the poetess conceives of the city is sombre. Deep voice of lamentation is heard in the public

thoroughfares. **Whispering alley**—narrow streets where subdued sound is heard. **Chimney-dishevelled**—the large number of chimneys on the roofs of houses are compared to hair in disorder. **Walks delicately**—slowly and cautiously without making noise. **Spectral**—like a ghost. **The chimney-dishevelled cut**—the moon rising among the tall chimneys, which appear like the disorderd hair of the city, is compared to a ghostly cut moving slowly and cautiously. **One**—a certain man. **Drooping**—dejected or sorrow-stricken. **Bedraggled**—soiled by dragging in the wet or dirt. **Stir not postures**—sit silent and still because gloomily angry. **Staring out**—with vacant looks. **Saimpering dreamy step**—wanders or loiters about as if half in sleep. **The little step**—in the evening the little squires are forlorn and you do not see many passers-by there. There is one dirty man standing there near the bauches on which gloomy and sullen persons are sitting and silently watching the gradual approach of the evening.

Lines 32—35. Spring garlands—In springtime looked beautiful with fresh foliage and flowers. **Fluttered with flags**—many plants with sword-shaped leaves, moistly growing in moist places, were beautifying the park. **Child imaginings**—the play of colour was so striking in the park that it seemed to have been decorated with the fancy of a child. **Powdered**—Pollen from flowers falling on the ground. **Exquisite and shy**—pretty flowers and buds. **Haunted with lovers**—place frequented by lovers. **Last year's ghosts**—the poor emaciated people who frequented the parks in the last spring time.

Explanation. The poetess is familiar with the parks of the city which look beautiful in spring time with fresh foliage, variegated flowers blooming and

shut. These parks are frequented by lovers and also by poor miserable people whom she saw these previously also. The change of year has not improved their lot. They are as miserable now as they were before.

Lines 36—40. Stripped—deprived of green leaves and flowers. **Ragpicker**—one who collects rags, etc., from ash-heaps, dung-hills etc. **Wrapped** **coat**—covering himself with a worn out castaway coat. **Emaciate**—thin and lean on account of starvation. **Picks up**—collects. **Littered**—scattered carelessly about. **Wreck of holiday**—the remains of things which we leave behind after enjoying a holiday. **Sprawled**—stretched carelessly as the body when lying.

Explanation. She is also familiar with the appearance of the parks in autumn when they are stripped off their green foliage and blossoming flowers. Then they look like a thin and lean ragpicker with tattered clothes on his body who picks up the castaway things of holiday makers and throw them on dust-heaps. The holiday-makers have caused these heaps to rise by scattering their old, discarded things and rubbish.

Lines 41—48. Monotone—A single unvaried tone or sound. **Gloomy mansions**—the big houses of rich people which in spite of their riches appear dull to the poetess. **Repeating** **despair**—the unvaried monotonous life which goes on day after day with the regularity of a routine. **Indifferent and dignified**—regardless of others and their wants and sufferings but at the same time proud and aloof. **Tarnished prisons**—gloomy looking lustreless prison houses. The mansions of big persons are called prisons because 'starving souls' live in them a life of dull monotony. **Lined** **white**—well decorated

and luxuriously furnished. **With dismal**
carpets—no doubt the houses are well-furnished and the floor is covered with costly carpets, but for this very reason a dead silence prevails among them. **Where** **are kept**—the rich people living luxurious life in magnificent mansions may be satisfying their physical needs, but being callous and selfish their spiritual nature remains undeveloped. They enjoy the world but lose their souls in the bargain. **Are kept**—the poetess uses this expression because the rich people are called prisoners in gilded palaces.

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Feeding **isolations**—they seem to thrive on their aloofness and coldness towards others. There is no warmth of feeling or sense of fellowship among them. **Not daring to escape**—they are afraid to break the fetters of their social position and its attending disadvantages.

Explanation. The luxuriously furnished mansions of the rich appear gloomy to the poetess as the people turing in them are like prisoners tied down to a dull routine of everyday life from which they cannot escape. They are indiffirent to others not belonging to their own class and in their pride and haughtiness away themselves too their relations are not cordial. They like to live in seclusion and prefer lonely aloofness to mix with people with sympathetic feelings. Though rolling in wealth they are devoid of generous impulses with the result that their soul remains starved.

Lines 49—54. Some roads—of the city. **Crude temples** **bust**—ugly looking places which pamper to the low tastes of the depraved or voluptuous people. **Squatting** **dream**—crouching.

or sitting on the ground and admiring some ugly scene. **Fat bejewelled** **gods**—vulgarily decorated. **Frock-coated**—fashionably dressed. **Undismayed by prayers or tears**—whose hearts you cannot move to sympathy in any way. **Their hats** **heads**—they put on their hats proudly slightly tilted to one side, as if they served as halos of gods or demi-gods.

Explanation. Then high up the road on an eminence the poetess finds houses of pleasures loving voluptuous persons who pamper to their low tastes where she finds people amusing themselves by admiring gaudily dressed women or men fashionably dressed with their hats tilted to one side and looking like halos round the heads of gods.

Lines 55—57—Ribald—low; base; mean; foul-mouthed and licentious. **Multi-coloured**—displaying variety of colours in their dresses. **Radiant**—beaming with light or shining. **Faces** **songs**—faces expressing their feelings of delight. **Hovering**—to remain aloft and move about and near. **Stardust**—cosmic dust; matter in fine particles falling upon the earth from some outside source, like meteorites.

Explanation. After having described the luxurious but dismal-looking mansions of the great, the poetess turns her attention to the simple and hearty joys of the poorer classes. She likes their vulgar crowds wearing clothes of varied colours. Their ardent natures and affections, loud laughter and happy faces like flowers appeal to her imagination. Their faces beaming with jollity are expressive as songs and their loud mirth seems to pervade everywhere like a stardust suspended in the atmosphere over the earth.

Lines 58—64. Memory-crusted taverns—inns and ale-houses which have become quite familiar on account of frequent visits. **My heart has leapt**—felt

extreme delight. **Like a white minstrel**—the dawn is compared to musician singing to harp and dressed in white clothes. **Stopped**--asked to say to entertain the party at the inn. **Fantastic**—fanciful and having love for its subject matter. **Serenades**—evening music in the open air, especially given by a lover to his mistress under her window at night; a piece of music suitable for such an occasion. **Called me forth**—attracted me. **Where**—in the open. **Chandeliers**—an ornamental frame with branches decorated with glass prisims for holding lights. **Through.... morning**—the morning is compared to a chandelier and the sun to the lights which shine forth from it. **Dew-prismed**—the rays of the sun striking the dew drops in the morning are broken into rainbow colours, just as they do when passing through a glass prism. Here the dew drops are compared to prisms.

Explanation. In these lines the poetess describes the charm of music which she enjoyed on occasions when a wandering minstrel was asked to stop at the familiar inn to entertain the party with his love songs. The music proved so attractive that often the poetess continue to hear it the whole night till the sun shone the next morning and his rays broke forth into rainbow colours passing through the dew drops.

Lines 65—68. Crippled houses—as contrasted with the mansions of the rich the houses of the poor people sadly lacked repairs. **Vitriol**—the popular name of sulphuric acid; a soluble sulphate of metal. **Green vitriol**—is sulphate of iron; blue of copper, and white of zinc. **Vitriol twilights**—the beautiful and varied colours seen in the clouds near the horizons after sunset and before sunrise. The colours are suggested by the word *Vitriol* as colours associated

with it. **Spitting smoke**—smoke coming out of the dilapidated houses. **Making oaths or mouths at one another**—the houses close to one another are imagined by the poetess to be persons swearing and distorting their faces in mockery at one another.

Explanation. The poetess, in preference to the mansions of the rich, likes to the houses of the poor in a dilapidated condition. It is a sight to see when the evening or morning twilight falls on them and colours them in different hues and smoke rises out of them. The houses seem to mock or swear at one another.

Lines 69—72. **Flaring**—burning with a glaring unsteady light. **Glittering or flashing.** **Tinsel lights**—glittering lights. **Tinsel**—something sparkling or shining as furnished brass. **Gaps of goblin darkness**—ghostly patches of darkness between the lighted portions. **Passaging**—leading into. **Cimmerian**—relating to the *Cimmerii* a tribe fabled to have lived in perpetual darkness. Homer describes them as living in a distant land of mist and gloom. Hence the word suggests extreme darkness. **Goblin darkness**—darkness suggesting the abode of mischievous spirits. **Depths of mystery and sin**—pitch darkness in which crimes are committed and mysterious incidents take place.

Explanation. The shops and windows are lighted with dazzling and glittering lights, but between them there are places of pitch darkness, reminding us of cimmerii and mischievous spirits, and leading to places where crimes often take place and cannot be easily detected.

Lines 73—77. **Wan**—thin, pale and emaciated. **Stare at me**—the poetess is a stranger in that locality. **Flickering pallor of the lamps**—the pale colour seen

in the unsteadily burning lamps. The children are so weak and pale that they are likely to die.

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Reflective . . . stars—so lovely as if they were strangers in this world. **Thrilled with horror . . . tragedies**—she is extremely terrified to imagine the terrible tale of sufferings and misfortunes and even death that these poor children must bear. **Hope**—feel almost a certainty that.

Explanation. In this locality the children of the poor people stare vacantly at the poetess. Their eyes and faces look so pale that death seems almost to have cast its shadow upon them. They seem like strangers in this world and she feels certain that their lives are bound to be full of misery and even they may meet with early death.

Lines 78—82. **Surround my heart**—haunt my mind reminding me of the miseries of the people living there. **In my soul . . . paths**—the thought of the streets makes an indelible but painful impression upon her soul. She is deeply moved at their thought. **Through them**—the paths cut into her soul. **Shadow figures**—unhappy poor persons. **Trudging through**—passing with difficulty or with weary steps. **The grey**—the sombre atmosphere. **Penitent souls**—repentant souls, suffering pain or sorrow for sin. **Haunted**—frequented or infested, especially by ghosts or apparitions. **Corridors**—a passage-way or open gallery communicating with separate chambers.

Explanation. After describing the streets of the city the poetess reflects upon what she has described. She now expresses her ideas suggested by the various scenes of the city. These weary streets besiege her heart and make an indelible painful impression upon her mind. She seems to see in her imagination

the poor people walking with weary steps in the sombre atmosphere, like the repentant spirits borne down by their sins.

Line 83—87—Thou maker of music—we weep out our sorrow in song. "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought". **Lingering and sweet**—our feeling of sorrow not only produces sweet music but haunting melody also. **Here doest . . . prayer**—but in the streets, where we find walking skeletons of poor people, our feeling of grief breaks forth into lamentations, and not sweet songs, moves us to tears, and overwhelming us with sorrow induces us to pray to God to relieve people's distresses and poverty.

Explanation The poetess invokes grief in these lines as a wanderer. Poets have often produced their songs when troubled by sorrow. But when a poet sees the wretched condition of poor people in big cities his feeling of sorrow breaks forth into loud lamentation and he is so much overpowered with grief that he cannot help weeping and praying to God for the amelioration of the poverty-stricken people. In other places the occasions of grief command go away, but here it stays longer. The misfortunes of the people are not short-lived.

Lines 88—97. Winding mazes—long tortuous lanes and streets. **Thy**—grief personified. **Stooping shoulders . . . seen**—grief stricken people with sorrowful faces and bent body are to be found in every part of the city. **Gate of brass . . . iron door**—palaces and mansions secure against intruders. Poverty-stricken people are found standing outside the doors of mansions. **Wait for . . . itself**—the hope that the next day something good may turn up. **Shut scrolls of sleep**—when they wake up next morning. **Scroll**—a roll of paper or parchment. Sleep is compared

here to a shut scroll, and it is hoped that when it would be unfolded, that is we wake up, something promising may be discovered. **And at the dusky curtain**—grief is found here also. Glory and Death are said to be separated only by a thin curtain because man's heroic attempts to achieve glory so often end in death. **And lover lover**—the obstacles in the way of a lover actually make him full of grief.

Explanation. There is no part of the city where you do not find people borne down with grief and wearing sorrowful faces. Even if you went to the big mansions and guarded palaces grief would be found there too. When people hope for a better day grief dogs their steps. The longing lovers and seekers after glory who easily fall victims to death are also not free from the experience of grief. The poetess describes rich and poor alike victims of grief.

Lines 98—100. In rustling . . . peace—it is a fine description of darkness of night accompanied with silence and peace. **Rustling folds**—falling in layer upon layer making a soft whispering sound. In Shakespeare we have "darkness thickens".

Explanation. The poetess is now sitting in her room, after her imaginary wanderings in the winding mazes of the city. It seems to her as if the spreading darkness was falling round her in folds making a soft whispering sound.

Lines 101—103. But round my heart—there may be peace outside but her heart is excited.

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Scarves—a scarf is a light decorative piece of dress worn loosely on the shoulders, or as a band about the neck. **Scarves of sleep and silence . . out**—it is impossible for her to withdraw herself in sleep and silence and thus cut herself away from the city. There may be

peace and silence all round but she has no peace of mind and will not sleep. The thought of the misery of the people haunts her mind even in her room.

Lines 104—106. Rush of streets—the din and noise of traffic and passers-by. **Shooting....chaos**—streets are compared to pointing fingers, piercing the darkness, as if to discover its secrets. **Night's remote divinity**—intruding upon the sacred darkness of night.

Explanation. She will not sleep because she would like to dwell upon the scene of darkness in the streets. At night the streets are imagined to be pointed fingers piercing through the darkness of the night, as if to unravel its mystic secrets.

Lines 107—110. Rid me of—just as she is not prepared to enjoy sleep and have peace of mind, she would not like to part with. **Scars that....thought**—the idea of pain caused by circumstances and men's selfishness. She would not like to forget the pain caused by the sight of the suffering humanity. **Shake-off**—remove.

Explanation. Time and man have made her unhappy because they are responsible for the misery of mankind. She would not forget this painful fact nor would relieve herself of feeling of sorrow caused by the conditions obtaining in the city.

Line 111—113. Thee—the city. **Escape**—forget or avoid. **Mother of mutiny and want**—the city has been called by this appellation because it is the abode of discontented people depressed by poverty. It is in the city that people are driven to rise in mutiny in order to change the social order and redress injustice. **Then beautiful.....grief**—the city and grief are inseparable. Misery is bound to grow with

development of big cities. They may be beautiful but they bestow no peace upon us.

Explanation. The poetess regrets that the conditions are such that the big cities are sure to grow; and it is not possible to leave them. But let us remember that along with their development and however beautiful they may be, misery and grief are also bound to increase. It is there that discontent increases and often breaks forth into open defiance.

Lines 114—120. Insomniac nights—nights which will allow us no sleep. Insomnia is sleeplessness. **Tambourine**—a shallow drum with one skin and bells or jingles, and played on with the hand. **Ineloquent**—not fluent or persuasive. **Ineloquent hands**—because time is supposed to be halting and dull. Time hangs heavily when we are unhappy. **The drums of war**—Refers to the struggles of the people against poverty and misery. **Fevering our minds**—causing excitement instead of bestowing the balm of sleep. **Swollen traffic of thoughts**—ideas crowding our mind and difficult problems crying for solution. In the day time just as there is din of traffic on the streets of the city, at night troublesome thoughts clamour loudly and do not allow you to sleep. **The wheels . . . search**—a continuous searching of the mind to find solutions of the knotty problems.

Explanation. The poetess confesses that it is not possible to enjoy sleep at night, because the time hangs heavily and painfully reminds her of the struggles of the poverty-stricken people. Her mind becomes excited and ideas crowd upon her, ending in the vain search for the solution of the difficult problems which the growth of cities have brought into existence.

Lines 121—124. Wandering—of course mentally in order to discover some solution of the problems.

Pricked with the lights—pierced with the sharp rays of lights. **Jostled by the worlds**—driven away by the unsympathetic people. **Jaded**—tired ; harassed. **Grey**—grey-haired ; prematurely old. **Sad pilgrim**—the moon moving slowly in the skies is compared to a wanderer who has lost his way.

Explanation. The poetess concludes the poem with a note of disappointment and sadness. Her wanderings in the city have tired her. Even the lights appear like piercing sharp things and the callous people have failed to understand the cause of her sorrow. The moon in the sky wandering slowly among the stars is not so tired as she is harassed in the world. She has no hope that the miserable people would ever be happy. Her anxiety has made her sombre and perhaps prematurely old.

WILLIAM H. DAVIES

6. THE CHILD AND THE MARINER.

Life and Work.—William Henry Davies was born on April 20, 1871, in a public house at Newfort, Wales. He attended school for a few years, but while still a small boy, he organized a robber gang among his school mates, and being caught stealing from the merchants in the neighbourhood, was forced to quit school. He was apprenticed to a picture-frame maker, and as soon as his apprenticeship was completed he crossed the Atlantic.

Arriving in New York at the age of twenty-four with ten dollars, he became acquainted with a professional tramp who introduced him to the ways of vagabonds and beggars. During the next six years he led the life of a vagabond, riding the rails from coast to coast, working occasionally as a bury-picker and begging food from farmsteads. His tramping career came to an abrupt close in his thirteenth year. In boarding a Canadian train he slipped under the wheels and had his right leg cut off at the knee.

Resolved to become a poet, Davies returned to England and lived in common-lodging houses, but he spent some of his time in free libraries reading and writing. He bargained with a printer to publish a volume of his poems which he called *The Soul's Destroyer* (1895) and he sent copies to various persons with the request that they may buy them for half a crown or return them. One of these fell into the hands of Bernard Shaw who says—"..before I had read three lines, I perceived that the author was a real poet."

His reputation established, Davies wrote rapidly and between 1905 and 1930 published twenty volumes of poetry and eight volumes of prose. Three of the poetry volumes are his *Collected Poems*, which appeared in 1916, 1923 and 1929. The last edition contains more than four hundred poems.

Characteristics as a Poet.—The most important thing about Davies to note is his sincerity and utter simplicity. Practically everything he has written reflects in some way these early hardships, that life of the road and contact with raw earth. He speaks directly from experience and his speech is couched in no vain trappings. There is no ostentation about his verses. He is most unsophisticated of poets. He is always himself.

Davies is primarily a nature poet and his little songs are comparable to 'nature wood-note wild.' In the presence of nature he is filled with emotions that burst forth in song. He is no minute observer of nature. Himself he has said—

*"Let others praise thy parts, Sweet Nature ; I
Who cannot know the barley from the oats,
Nor call the bird of note, nor name a star,
Claim thy heart's fulness through the face of things."*

He does not care to analyse the different natural phenomena, on the other hand he likes quietly to lie down and 'count the oak trees one by one.'

Davies is pre-eminently a lyric poet. The few longer pieces he has attempted do not attain that excellence which pertains to his smaller songs. The intensity of feelings, the emotional abandon, the irresistible music are always present in his poems. For example—

*"Sing for the sun your lyric, lark
Of twice ten thousand notes;*

*Sing for moon your nightangles,
Whose light shall bless your throats."
Sing sharrows, for the soft warm rain,
To wet your feathers through;
And when a rainbow's in the sky,
Sing you cuckoo-cuckoo."*

This is pure and perfect song, the lyric note unmistakable, the technique flawless.

Davies' verses have often been condemned as vulgar because they are devoid of that polish which is deemed by certain critics to be essential to poetry. It is true that Davies has made use of quite unconventional diction, but most readers will agree, that this departure from the oft-trodden path gives beauty and strength to his verses rather than detracts from their excellence.

Substance of the Poem.—The story is described by a child. His grand-father is an old retired sailor who rose to be a captain. The old man is simple in his faith and life. He is a devout religious man full of sympathy for others. As a seasonal sea-man he knows the changes of weather. His house is full of curious things collected during his voyages in all parts of the world. The little child is not so much impressed by the experiences of his grand-father as he is by the tales of adventure of a visitor. The visitor is also a sea-man and claims to be the old man's nephew. He knows the weakness of the children for strange stories of adventures in foreign lands. He takes advantage of this weakness and describing his adventure and strange people of distant lands he fascinates the fancy of the children. They eagerly listen to his stories, wild and exaggerated, and are impressed by his heroic deeds. Like other children, the one describing the story falls a victim to his charm and gives him pennies. In the eyes of

this child the sailor is a great hero. But the fact is that he has been ruined by drink. That is why he never rose in his life. He has washed all his life in evil ways and has never been found a dependable sailor. But the child complains that his hero deserved a better luck. The sailor cheats children and with their money makes himself merry. The old man knows that the sailor is a wicked man but the child cannot believe it, as the latter in his eyes is an ideal man.

Appreciation.—The poem reveals an aspect of child psychology. Children are usually fond of stories specially those describing strange lands and their people and the deeds of adventurous heroes. Their imagination becomes alert when they hear such stories. Then there is no child who is not a hero-worshipper. He has boundless enthusiasm and admiration for a man like the sailor described in the poem. It is impossible for the child to judge the merit of the man or to discover the defects of character, if once he has been accepted as a hero. As we grow up we become more critical but as children we adore our hero as a faultless man. Heroic deeds and adventurous life strongly appeal to the child's mind. We are reminded of Desdemona who was charmed by Othello's deeds of bravery and then madly fell in love with him.

The wicked sailor knows that the children are not critical and so without fear of contradiction he gives even false and exaggerated account of his voyages, and cheats children of their pennies to spend them on drink.

The description of the grandfather's house and his character is excellent, and so is of the voyages of the sailor. The details are vivid and simple picture are drawn in a manner that they leave an impression

of the mind. There are no forced details or straining after effects. It is a simple tale simply told. The whole poem breathes the atmosphere of sea-life and this makes a strong appeal to the young.

THE CHILD AND THE MARINER

Notes.

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Lines 1—6. Dumb things—animals. **They saw** **child**—they fully believed that those who followed Christ were sure to go to heaven. Christ is often painted with a small lamb in his arms and a flock following him, symbolizing a Christian congregation led and cared for by Christ. Lamb is also the symbol of innocence and meekness. **Their faith** **doubt**—their religious faith was a maker of deep conviction which was never disturbed by any doubts. **Draped**—covered or obscured. **Death** **soon**—the grand parents were never afraid of death which they looked upon like the evanescent many-coloured rainbow soon melting away in the white, colourless light of eternity. It means that they believed death to be the gateway to eternal life in heaven.

Lines 7—9. Seafaring man—sailor. **Rough**—only in his external appearance because he was a seaman. **The nut** **milk**—just as a nut has a hard rough outer surface but when broken contains sweet juice inside, so the old sailor had a kind heart within though outwardly he looked a rough sailor.

Lines 9—14. Watched the winds—observed the directions of the winds indicating the weather and the likelihood of ships returning home safe. **For sailor's wives**—because they were anxious for the

safe return of their husbands. **Had**—encountered. **What afternoons**—whether fair or foul ; stormy or calm weather.

Explanation. As an experienced old sailor he could like an expert read the signs of weathers and foretell quiet or stormy seas at all hours of day and night. The wives of sailors could learn from him whether their husbands at sea were encountering storms or were having calm seas.

Lines 15—17. **Leapt**.....**roar**—he would recoil from scandalous talk or defamatory remarks about others. **Whisper**—any scandal uttered in whispers. **For a plague**—as it was a contagious or tell disease.

Lines 18—19. **Took offence at Heaven**—complained God. **Passed**—went away unnoticed by him. **Sternly**—of course, not angrily. He felt sorry if any beggar without receiving his help would go away unnoticed. He would loudly call him back to give alms.

Lines 20—31. **Spliced**—a piece of rope used as a handle by uniting its two ends by interweaving. **Not touched**.....**died**—the old coins were seldom handled and so they were cold.

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Methought—it seemed to me. **Battled ships**—small toy ships enclosed in bottles.

Explanation. These lines give quite a realistic description of things collected and preserved by sailors as curios and momentaries of their voyages.

Line 34. **To no lovely end**—but sailors being unpractised the things which they constructed with their hands for the sake of amusement were not well finished. They were crude looking things, though interesting.

Lines 35—37. Charts—maps of the seas. **Black dots**—marked portions which indicated islands. **Pirate's burned gold**—many interesting stories are known of the pirates who keep their booty buried safely in islands difficult to approach.

Lines 38—44. Grand dad—the grand-father. **Turn Barium's hill**—some local landmark, at least important for the child. **Clad in iron mail**—even when so burdened. **Made one club**—easily lift up a man as a log of wood and use him to strike others.

Explanation. From these lines the main story begins. Henry, a sailor addicted to drinking is introduced to us a strong, 'able' man.

Lines 45—55. Sooth—indeed. **What secret are his**—he knows all the mysteries of the sea. There is nothing about the sea which he does not know. **Coral islands**—the coral reefs of the Pacific and Indian Oceans and the Red Sea are often many miles in extent. **Phoenicians**—inhabitants of Phoenicia on the coast of Syria. **Common ballast**—heavy matter employed to give a ship sufficient immersion in the water and to keep it steady. **Mermaid**—a sea-woman, having the head and body of a lovely woman to the waist, ending in the tail of a fish. **Reared and stretched**—raised up and expanded.

Explanation. The sailor is undoubtedly poorly clad but there is hardly anything about the sea that he does not know. He has seen the islands on coral reefs and dark-complexioned girls who desire intimacy with white sailors. He has seen countries richer than Spain and Phoenicia where people possessed so much silver that it was used for ballast in the holds of ships or for mangers for their houses. He has also seen mermaids who would raise up their

golden hair, like serpents, to take the air on the surface of the sea.

Lines 56—58. Gave with joy—because the child found out his hero in him.

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He will.....rich—in his enthusiastic admiration for the sailor the child relieves all sorts of fantastic things about him.

Lines 59—64. Toiled before the mast—remained an ordinary sailor. **Only death.....them**—the sailor has remained an inferior while his companions have all risen to positions of trust and responsibility. Now he can be like them only when they are all dead. Death is the only leveller now.

Lines 65—66. Nor went.....shore—so long as he could get money for his drink on land he would not go to sea.

Lines 67—70. Sound—a narrow passage of water, a strait. **Sweet odours fan**—workmen enjoy the fragrant breeze. The tropical islands produce spices. **Cingalese**—inhabitants of ceylon. **But came.....spent**—but he returned penniless having drunk away all his wages.

Lines 71—73. Morgue—a place where bodies found dead are laid out for identification. **Wharf**—bank of timber or stone on the shore of a harbour for loading unloading. **Keel**—the bottom of the ship.

Lines 74—81. Pricked with Indian ink—taltood. **Rare and delicate**—the figures which were pricked on his bodies were nicely done. **As dead man.....ferns**—the sailor's body was extravagantly taltood that it looked like one struck with lightning under trees on which had fallen all sorts of twigs and leaves.

Chains, anchors—the figures pricked. **Jane of Appledore**—the name of his ship. **Schooner**—a swift sailing two-masted ship. **Rigged**—equipped with sails and tackling. This figure was also pricked.

Lines 82—88. **He could**.....**voice**—it was impossible for him to speak in whispers. Excessive drink had effected his voice. **Muffled close**.....**wind**—covered themselves as protection against wind.

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Indian corn—maize.

Lines 89—95. **Full well**.....**world**—he knew everything about the sea. **Cape Horn**—the southern point of America on the island of Fuegian Archipelago. **Happy to hear**... ..**slaughter-house**—he felt quite at home amidst terrifying seas. He was delighted to hear the storm approaching. **Grunt and squeal**—to make a sound like a fig and utter a shrill loud cry.

Lines 96—100. **To drown**..... ..**deep**—it was his ambition to meet a watery grave in the sea. **Dainty corpse**—not mangled and mutilated. **Nep-tune**—the sea. It is the name of sea god in greek mythology. **Larder**—a room where meat, etc. is kept.

Lines 101—105. **Small-coasters**—small boats which do not sail far from the coast. **Fishing smacks**—small boats for fishing purposes. **Can see the coast**—were afraid to go in the open sea at a distant from the coast. **Sabbath day**—Sunday.

Lines 106—109. **Tankards**—a large vessel for holding liquors. **Bottled stuff**—liquors which he could not name as they belonged to foreign lands. **Liquid fire like Hell**—so strong that it may be compared to hell fire. **Gulp**—quaff; drink in large quan-

tities. **But Paradise to sip**—but when taken in small doses, as good as heavenly drink or nectar.

Lines 110—113. **Nor did**.....**voice**—the children enjoyed the talk of the sailor and were more wonder-struck by his descriptions than were the people of old who listened to Lazarus, after they had seen him dead and stone, when he was healed by Christ.

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Lines 114—124. **Argostoli**—in Greece, capital of Cephalonia, island off the west coast. **Cephalonias's sea**—the Ionian sea. **Ran over**.....**floods**—a storm drove his ship on the land. **Chinese**.....**sing**—their language resembled the sound of birds. **Volcano Martinique**—Mont Pelee on the island of Martinique, West Indies. **Caribbean seas**—Part of the Atlantic ocean between south and central America and the islands of Cuba, Hayti and Porto Rico. **And made**.....**fire**—the eruption of the volcano made the whole sea look as if it was on fire and so the sun appeared to have set in a sea of fire. **Which only half was his**—the brightness of the sea was due half to the streak rays of the sun falling on its surface and half to the reflection of fiery eruptions from the volcano. **Dust was**.....**mast**—matter thrown out by the active volcano.

Lines 125—127. **Dropped**....**ears**—the child was eager to learn all that he could describe. **Such words**.....**perplexed**—all that he heard from the sailor so excited his imagination that he could not sleep for half the night. **Sleep stood perplexed**—sleep was confused to find the child in a peculiar state of mind.

Lines 128—139. **How isles**.....**amaze**—to his amazement how he saw islands submerging and new ones rising up. Earthquakes cause this phenomenon. **They**—islands. **Cheated charts**—falsified

their maps. **Told how a crew**.....**barque**—the superstitious sailors believe that some birds flying on the ship and accompanying it are auspicious. Specially the albotress is supposed to bring good luck to the crew. We are reminded of the story immortalized in 'the Rime of the Ancient Mariner' by Coleridge. **Sea's sharp needles**—the pointed rocks under the sea. **Ripped open**—cut up. **That haunt**.....**ghosts**—sometimes icebergs have been seen floating down the Atlantic Ocean. **He told of**.....**heel**—this is a wild exaggeration which only children may believe. **Star board**—the right-hand side of a ship, to one looking towards the bow. **Keel**—the bottom of a ship.

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Lines 140—151. Wander day after day—for days together men must sink to reach the bottom. Another exaggeration to terrify children. **Bosphorus**—the strait between the Black sea and the sea of Marmora, separating Europe from Asia Minor. **He thought**.....**Paradise**—a little touch of humour. Did he deserve to go to Paradise?

Lines 152—160. Ready hand—always ready to accept. **Signed for**.....**cruise**—signed a contract to go as sailor on a short voyage. **Could such a**.....**unknown?**—in the eyes of the children the sailor was a hero, if not a demigod, and so they could not imagine him to die an inglorious death. **Nay**—they fondly imagined. **Kept his**.....**life**—having made himself rich and probably ruling a country he had given up the seafaring life. **"A dawn had**.....**port or out"**—this remark of the grandfather completely shatters the picture of the sailor which the children had formed of him. **Landshark**—a land-grabber; one who plunders sailors on shore. **No good**.....**out**—equally useless on land or sea.

ALFRED NOYES

7. THE HIGHWAYMAN.

Life and Works.—Alfred Noyes, an English poet, was born in Staffordshire on September 16, 1880. He was educated at Exeter College, Oxford. In 1902 he published his first volume of poems *The Loom of Tess*, and his *Collected Poems* appeared in 1910, 1920 and 1927. His *Forty Singing Seamen* (1907) and *Drake* (1908) are patriotic sea poems. His lectures on sea poetry given in America in 1913 and 1914 were published as *The Sea in English Poetry*. He was elected to the professorship of modern English literature at Princeton University, but he resigned in 1923. He contributed to the *Blackword's Magazine*, *The Cornhill*, etc. His other publications include *The Wine Press* (1914), *A Salute from the Fleet* (1915) *Rada*, play (1915); *The Walking Shadows*, short stories (1917); *The Elfin Artist* (1920); *The watchers of the sky* (1912); *The Hidden Player*, a novel (1912). In 1924 he published *Aspects of Modern Poetry* containing essays of literary value. *The Book of Earth* came out in 1925 and *Robin Hood*, a poetic drama was staged in 1927.

His Poetry.—The poetry of Alfred Noyes is characterized by a voluminous and sustained out-pouring of verse. He is a writer of unusual energy and still more facility in expression. His meanings are perfectly clear, his feelings sincere and happy. He expresses them at great length, and not infrequently with what seems an unnecessary repetition. This method has certain odds. It finds favour with one kind of audience only. Those who love secrets of twilight confi-

dence tolerate with considerable grumbling a long and explanatory discourse. Alfred Noyes' following has the basis of popular response. Therein we find intelligibility both of emotion and speech, the interest in life and ordinary ideas of the time, the enthusiasm and the robust moral sense, and the power of finding for the accompaniment to the emotions an endless series of variations of old metrical themes. Nothing illustrates this better than *Sherwood*, a scene rich with manifold old associations, natural as well as literary, echoing with a music full of the appropriate lilt and just touched with appropriate regret. There is always a class of popular readers who live to read history and philosophy in verse rather than in prose. The amount of 'pure poetry', which suits the want of delicate palates may not be there, but it is 'God's plenty' for others.

The poet is therefore popular and his poetry is saleable. His imagination never passes astride the range of ordinary man's understanding, and the sing song music of his lives charms even the best trained ears. The religious ideas he embodies in poems of a religious nature like *de profundis* and *The Paradox* are those commonly accepted by English readers. He is unable to prove the depths of the heart, but he is responsive to the beauty of the world.

The genius of Alfred Noyes is narrative and epic, and his *Drake* (1906—8) is a poem which is remarkable for its narrative strength, vividness of description, and the vastness of its action. The story in itself is quite interesting and it contains numerous passages of imaginative splendour. Other poems, such as, *In a Railway Carriage*, and *The Newspaper Boy*, show Noyes' realistic liking of common life in verse. He is always sanely beautiful and he uses a large vocabulary with fluent readiness. He is careless

in the use of metre. Like Tennyson he is always readable but not often stimulating. But he is a true poet.

Alfred Noyes' poetry is full of music. His poems float to us as lightly as the distant chiming of bells, or as if the fairies danced when he wrote and he kept to the measure; or as if the poem came to him wind-carried, butter-fly borne, or as softly as a rose petal upon a stream's surface. This music which lapses occasionally into cloying sweetness has an accompaniment of diverse metrical harmonies. In fact the poet has a genius for making new metres. *Astrid* has rhymes at the beginning of a line. Sometimes he uses an entirely new metre, or enriches old metre with new harmonies in the refrain. *The Highwayman* and *The Lord of Misrule* have ten stanzas with the same rhyme and *The Phantom Fleet* has a combination of quatrains with Spenserian stanzas.

Substance of the Poem.—A robber was secretly in love with the daughter of an inn keeper. On one moonlit stormy night he made himself ready to plunder a rich booty and riding on horse back went secretly to bid good-bye to his love. He was on horseback and she was looking out of her window. He bade her farewell and promised to return the next day at the latest next night whatever happened. But the robber was not aware that he and his love were being watched at that time by his rival ostler, who also loved the girl. He overheard all that passed between the lovers, and envious as he was reported the whole thing to the king's soldiers who were on the look-out for the robber. Before the time he was expected at the inn, they reached there and posted themselves in order to shoot him immediately he came there to meet his love. They also tied the girl to a half-post and mockingly fastened a rifle to her side as if she was also keeping watch like them.

As soon as the robber's approach on horseback was heard in the inn a loud report of rifle-fire was heard. The girl while tied to the ned post had managed to reach her finger on the trigger of the loaded rifle. In order to give a signal of danger to the approaching robber she shot herself dead. He too hearing the report of the gun scented some danger and turned away from the inn. The next morning he heard all that had happened to the girl and he disdained the idea of escaping alive. He turned to meet the soldiers and died like a brave man fighting and paid with his life for his love who had already sacrificed herself for his safety.

The village people still seem to hear the same sound of the hoofs and whistling etc. because they believe that the spirits of this robber and his love haunt that locality and the same drama of meeting lovers is repeated.

Remarks on the Poem.—It is a short romantic tale of love ending in a double tragedy. The charm of the whole piece lies in narration but the poet has heightened it considerably by creating a dramatic interest in the situation of the lovers. The opening description of the windy moon-lit night creates the proper atmosphere for lovers to meet and the robber to go on his expedition. He does not seem to be an ordinary highwayman. His dress, described in detail, shows that he is an important person in his fraternity. Then Bess, the landlord's black-eyed daughter, her hair, 'the black cascade of perfume' create a realistic picture of beauty. But she is more faithful in her love than her person is charming. Her love is true and passionate and for the sake of her man she unhesitatingly sacrifices herself. From a village beauty she suddenly grows into heroic proportions. The robber also shows himself worthy of being loved

by such a girl. Though a robber he is actuated by the noblest sentiment of love and dies a hero in our eyes.

The language of the poem is simple but not devoid of poetic expressions and vivid pictures. The tale reminds us of days now gone for ever and has for its setting a suggestive historical background.

THE HIGHWAYMAN

PART ONE.

Notes.

Page 25.

Stanza 1. The wind.....darkness—a fine poetic expression. High winds and darkness are combined in one picture. **Gusty trees**—trees violently moving on account of the wind. **The moon**.....**cloudy seas**—the moon looked pale and appeared like a tempest torned ship in the cloudy sky. **Ribbon of moonlight**—a ribbon like thing shining by moonlight. **Highwayman**—robber.

Explanation. The poet has drawn a beautiful picture of the cloudy sky on that windy night when the moon occasionally appeared in the sky. The lovely road was just visible like a streak when the robber rode up to the inn-door.

Stanza 2. **Locked-hat**—the old-fashioned three-cornered hat worn as a part of full uniform.

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Claret—light red colour as of the wine of that name. **Doeskin**—buchokin. **With never a wrinkle**—close-fitting, without a crease. **Jewelled twinkle**—

sparkling eyes. **A-twinkle**—shining. **Jewelled**—stormy sky.

Explanation. This is the description of the robber's dress who was in a tip-top condition and well-armed ready to go on his business.

Stanza 3. Cobbles—rounded stones used in paving. **Clattered and clashed**—the sound produced by the hooves of the horse. **Whistled window**—so that Bess, the landlord's daughter, may know his presence there. **Plaiting hair**—she was interweaving an intricate knot of red silk ribbon used as a token of love. The love knot is a particular way of tying the ribbon.

Explanation. When the lover arrived at the window of the girl's house he tapped the shutters and whistled. The girl opened the window while she was doing her hair and interweaving a love-knot in it.

Stanza 4. A stable-wicket creaked—a small gate leading to the stable turned making a creaking sound. **Ostler**—one who is in charge of horses and stable at an inn. Same as hostler. **White**—on account of horror and shock of surprise. **Peaked**—looking thin and sickly. **His madness**—wild looks like that of a madman. **Mouldy**—grown over with fungus. **Dumb as a dog**—but he had not the courage to speak a word.

Explanation. The lovers were not aware that they were watched by the envious ostler who also loved Bess. He was horror-stricken to find the inn as the trysting place of the robber.

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Stanza 5. Bonny sweetheart—beautiful girl. **After a prize**—going out to plunder a rich booty. **They press me sharply**—pursued hotly by those whom I plunder or by soldiers. **Harry**—harass. **Moon-**

light—such repetitions of words are common in the ballad or popular poetry. **Though hell.....the way**—a touch of dramatic irony and unconscious prophecy. Even if hell stood in his way or if ever he had to cross hell to reach her. This remark overheard by the ostler will seal the doom of the lovers.

Stanza 6. He scarce.....hand—because her window was high. **Loosened.....casement**—she allowed her thick long hair to hang outside the window. **His face.....brand**—he was so passionate at that moment and so strongly swayed by emotion that his face shone like a sword. **The black cascade of perfume**—long black hair highly perfumed. The hair falling out of the window is compared to a waterfall. **Waves**—the hair was wavy and curly. The word, waves is quite appropriate for another reason also as the hair is compared to a cascade. **Tugged**—pulled.

Explanation. The window in which the girl came out was too high for the robber to kiss her or reach her hand. And so he rose up in the stirrups and she threw down her long and perfumed black hair upon his breast and that he kissed and galloped away.

PART TWO.

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Stanza 1. In the dawning—in the early morning hour. **Tawny sunset**—twilight glowing with a yellowish brown colour. **Gypsy's ribbon**—like a ribbon worn by gypsies, the nomadic tribe. A sense of mystery is also suggested by the word gypsy. **Looping....moor**—Enclosing the large tract of untilled ground. **A red-coat troop**—soldiers in red uniform. **King George's men**—soldiers. It does not matter which of the four Georges is mentioned here.

Explanation. Instead of the robber returning to the inn after his successful plunder there came a body of soldiers in uniform. The ostler, obviously informed the authorities that the robber would be coming to the inn at a particular hour. That was the easiest way of doing away with his rival.

Stanza 2. **They drank....instead**--the unruly behaviour of the soldiers. **Gagged**—forcibly stopped her mouth. **Knelt at....casement**—looked out of the window to watch the approaching robber. **There was....window**—soldiers posted themselves at every window ready to fire, immediately they saw the robber approaching. **Hell**—even worse than death.

Explanation. The soldiers tie and gag the girl so that she may not help him to escape if he came and they themselves watched him from the window ready to shoot at him straightway he approached there.

Stanza 3. **They tied.....attention**—the soldiers tied Bess to the bed post keeping her in the standing position, as if she was made to stand erect like a soldier at attention. This is another touch of irony as she certainly desired to watch his approach, but for a different reason—to give him a warning. **Sniggering**—laughing in a half suppressed manner. **They had.....breast**—in all respects she must look like a soldier doing his duty.

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Now keep good watch—soldiers remarking in a teasing manner. **They kissed her**—when she could not resist. **The dead man**—her lover the robber. He was not yet dead but Bess was quite certain that he would be shot down and so calls him a dead man even now. She reminds herself of the words ringing in her ears about his promise to return at an hour drawing nigh.

Explanation. The soldiers not only tie her up but fasten her to the bedpost in the standing posture with a rifle also tied to her side. They insult her in her helplessness and mock her by asking her to keep watch. She now thinks of his return and knows the road that he would take.

Stanza 4. Twisted—in order to loosen them **Held good**—were securely tied. **Writhed**—violently twisted. **With sweat or blood**—she could not see whether it was blood or perspiration coming out her hands. Her pain was of course great. **Stretched and strained**—drawn out and tightened with great force. **The hours like years**—time moved on heavily. **On the stroke of midnight**—exactly when the clock struck twelve. **Cold**—the trigger was cold. **The trigger . . . hers**—she could press it and thus fire the musket.

Explanation. With the greatest difficulty she was able to twist her hands and after a long struggle was able to reach the trigger of the musket. Time was slowly moving, but by midnight she had gained the trigger and that was an achievement.

Stanza 5. She strove . . . rest—now she did not try to gain any more freedom for her limbs. **She would hearing**—she did not want to disturb soldiers by any kind of noise lest they detected that she obtained the control of the trigger. **And the blood refrain**—her heart was throbbing as if keeping time with the refrain of the lover. **Refrain**—a burden recurring at the end of each division of a poem. In her ears were resounding the last words of the robber. See the last lines of Stanza 3.

Explanation. Having secured the trigger she did not care to extricate herself from the bondage. She was also afraid to arouse the suspicion of the soldiers by any movement or noise. She looked out

of the window and waited for her lover's approach while her heart was throbbing and his last words of promise ringing in her ears.

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Stanza 6. **Tlot-tlot**—the sound of the hoofs. **Had they heard it**—the question anxiously put to herself by the girl. **They**—the soldiers. **Were they . . . hear**—the soldiers are not alert perhaps they are drowsy. **The ribbon of moonlight**—the road which looked like a ribbon in moonlight. **Brow of the hill**—ridge or edge of a hill. **Priming**—putting powder on the nipple of a firearm.

Explanation. She was the first to hear the sound of hoofs when the robber was approaching. Undoubtedly it was he coming down riding from the edge of the hill on the road visible in the moonlight. When he came nearer and the sound became more distinct the soldiers began to put powder in the nipple of their muskets and Bess stood up erect and motionless.

Stanza 7. **Her face was like a light**—her face was beaming as the moment of tensest excitement had arrived. That was the moment of her supreme sacrifice. **Grew wide**—dilated; her eyes looked wild. **Her musket moonlight**—the smoke coming out of the musket when fired broke up the light of the moon falling in a streak in her chamber. **Warned him death**—that was her purpose in killing herself.

Explanation. Before the soldiers could see him within the range of their fire, Bess took her last deep breath. Her face shone brightly and her eyes opened wide. She pressed the trigger and filled the room with smoke killing herself in a moment, and thus

warned the approaching robber of danger by the loud report of the gun.

Stanza 8. **He**.....**west**—hearing the loud report he changed his course. **He did**.....**blood**—but he did not know the tragedy and what had happened to Bess. Only the next morning he came to know all that happened and how Bess had managed to save him from death by cleverly putting an end to her life.

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Stanza 9. **Back**—he turned back to face the enemy. He felt an urge to die when Bess was gone. **Spurred**—wildly drove his horse. **Shouting**.....
.....**sky**—cursing loudly his enemies. **Smoking**
behind him—raising the clouds of dust by his speed. **Blood-red**.....**spurs**—because he had penetrated them in the sides of his horse to speed him up. **Wine-red**.....**coat**—there was no attempt on his part to escape alive after the skirmish.

Explanation. Maddened by the loss of Bess he defiantly challenged the soldiers and met his death at their hands like a brave man and true lover.

Stanza 10—11. These two last stanzas practically repeat the scene of the opening stanzas. The people in the neighbourhood say that they see the spirits of the robber and Bess repeating the same drama when the weather conditions are exactly what they were on the night of the actual tragedy.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

8. MISS THOMPSON GOES SHOPPING.

Life and Work.—Martin Armstrong, English novelist and poet, was born near Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, on October 2, 1882. He was educated at Chesterhouse School and then at Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he took his B.A. degree in Mechanical Science, a subject he most disliked. At the University his chief interest were classical and modern literature and music. After taking up a few jobs of temporality he visited Italy and went curiously through a study of Italian art. When the War broke out he joined the British Rifles. In 1917 he went to the French front and stayed there till the Armistice.

On his return he took to literature seriously. He wrote reviews of books for the *New Statesman*, *Outlook*, *Spectator* and other papers. Later he became for some time the literary editor of the *Spectator*. In 1930 he married Jessie McDonald of Montreal, Canada, and has one son.

His chief hobbies are walking, gardening, music and painting. He is deeply interested not only in English and French but Italian and Spanish literature also. As a novelist his work shows greater influence of the French novelist than English. He dislikes Tennyson and Browning as poets. His admiration for Shelley is not now so great. His favourite poets after Shakespeare, are now Milton, Wordsworth, John Donne and Dante. Don Quixote is another favourite book. Among the continental writers he likes Racine, Balzac and Paul Valery.

Martin Armstrong is generally versatile. He

emerged from the war joyous and aesthetic. He is generally humorous and avoids tragedy.

Among his more important novels may be mentioned *The Compasses* (1925), *Desert* (1926) *The Stepson* (1927), *St. Christopher's Day* (1928), *The Sleeping Fury* (1929), *Adrian Glyude* (1930), *Mr. Darby* (1931) *Lover's Leap* (1932), and *The Foster Mother* (1933). His short stories have also been well-received, and of them must be mentioned *The Puppet Show* (1922), *The Bazaar* (1924), and *The Fiery Dive* (1929). His poem *Exodus* appeared in 1912, and *Thirty New Poems* in 1918. *The Bazzards* came out in 1921 and *The Bird Catcher* in 1929. His *Collected Poems* were published in 1931.

Characteristics.—Martin Armstrong is unusually versatile and has written in many unrelated fields. Several critics have commented on this faculty. Elewellyn Jones says :—"But there is one fundamental interest that unifies, and that interest is the quality of human life as it is lived moment by moment."

John Freeman wrote in 1929 : 'He is a man of letters in a closer application of the phrase than is commonly justified'. And again, 'He came through the war unhurt, serene, unembittered. Others have produced painful, brutal, or helpless books; but Mr. Armstrong, sensitive as an artist and tingling with modern aestheticism when he joined the forces, has refrained from feeding the appetite for horrors. He has preserved the English tradition of reticence and restraint. His outlook upon life and men have not been dictated by the war and its sequels. He is sane and humorous in his regard, avoiding tragedy so far as he honestly can, never letting an ill-comprehended character rush him into a needless violence or calamity.' The important thing for the future critic to note is that Mr. Armstrong's work is comic and not

tragic. He is a little distant and indulgent in his regard of human failings.

Louis Butermeyer classes Mr. Martin Armstrong the poet, among the composers of 'crocus crowded lyrics', but finds him a prose writer of delicate manners.

Remarks on the Poem—Miss Thompson lived in a lonely cottage on the downs and used to go on weekly market days to the neighbouring town to make purchases. One market day she finished her household work, neatly dressed herself and went out with her basket for purchases. It was not without a feeling of delight that she reached the thronged streets of the town.

She had nothing in particular to buy, yet wherever she saw tempting things she looked into the shop windows and desired to purchase them. First she entered a boot-shop which she examined as if it was a boot-museum. She admired even those shoes which she could not wear. Her eyes fell upon a beautiful pair of slippers. They were gaudy but they tempted her. But when the price was mentioned she found it too high for her means and so overcoming the temptation left the shop.

Next, she went to a fishmonger. All sorts of fishes were there. The variety confused her and so did the stink of the fishmarket. But there she closed the bargain soon as she was afraid of the fishmonger who was a huge man. She bought two skippers and came away.

The temptation of the pair of slippers was again very strong and this time it became irresistible. Straight she went to the boot-shop and purchased the pair.

Then she went to the chemist's shop. Here

things were very neat and clean. Bottles properly labelled were arranged nicely and the shop was full of 'medicinal stink.' She purchased a number of articles which we doubt she really needed or had gone with the intention of purchasing.

Next it was the turn of the grocer and the milliner to receive Miss Thompson's attention. She forgot her home and went from shop to shop like a bee in search of honey, till her purse was empty though her basket was full. It was dark by the time she returned home. But the enthusiastic feeling which she experienced while making purchases had vanished and the charm of the new articles was more than half gone.

The poet enlivens a commonplace subject by his humour and gives us interesting pictures of familiar objects. We have all seen boot-shops, fish-markets and chemist's shop but we never imagined that such familiar and unpromising material could be inviting enough for a poet and bud itself to an interesting treatment. The poet has not used much of his imagination and still he has been able to give us a piece delightful to read. The charm lies in description. So far as the characters are concerned we find the poet giving us simple description of their appearances and dresses but his subtle touches of humour make them interesting and we get glimpses of their characters too. Miss Thompson herself leads these figures and she is followed by Mrs. Watson, Mr. Miles and Mr. Wren. The matter of fact details have not been allowed to become bald by the underlying humour. Miss Thompson is an interesting study but we pity her for losing much of her enthusiasm and delight by the time she returns home. The joy of new purchases and her fight against temptation add to the interest of the poem.

MISS THOMPSON GOES SHOPPING

Notes.

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Lines 1—10. Docris—a tract of hilly land, used for pasturing sheep. In singular the word means a bank of sand thrown up by the sea. **Blizzards**—blinding storms of wind and snow. **Crowns of shining clouds**—having clouds on their tops. **Wheeling**—circling. **Plover**—a well-known wading bird. **Clover** a genus of plants affording rich pasturage. **Correct**—free from faults but formal. **Spinster**—an unmarried woman; an old maid. **Tucked**—closely gathered together. **Bowl**—a basin for domestic use; a round drinking cup. **Shoal**—a place where the water of a river, etc. is not deep. **Tucked..... a shoal**—the town in the cup-like hollow of the downs appeared like pebbles gathered together in shallow water.

Explanation. Miss Thompson, a spinster and lonely woman lived in a cottage on a hill place from where the town below appeared like pebbles gathered together.

Lines 11—19. Banked..... up—made up a fire by covering it with a heap of fuel so pressed down as to remain a long time burning slowly. **Slipped**—went up hurriedly.

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Her sacred best—the best one being meant for Sunday. **Trimmed**—decorated. **Rusty**—time worn or discoloured. **Plust**—a variety of cloth woven like velvet, but differing from it in having a longer and more open pile. **Simpering**—smiling in a silly affected manner.

Explanation. Her dress is described in these lines. She is 'correct' and though unmarried she is not unmindful of her appearance and looks when going to market.

Lines 20—24. **Sneaked the door**—shut the door with a latch. **Plunged pocket**—safely put the key in a pocket. Again, the poet illustrates her 'correctness' and attention to details.

Lines 25—34. **Tripped**—moved with short light steps. **Demurely**—in an affectedly modest manner. **Spread wider**—the town appeared to grow in size. **Sprawling**—spreading ungracefully. **Enclosed her**—she was in the labyrinth of streets. **Throbbing mind**—her heart was thrilled with delight. **As—when.** **Prim**—affectedly nice. **Merged into life**—lost among the throngs of people and in the town.

Explanation. She reaches the town and is mixed in the crowd thronging the frequented places there.

Lines 35—36. **Serenely down dream**—Miss Thompson finding herself among the throngs of the people felt so very happy that she may be compared to something quietly floating on the surface of a stream. **Floated dream**—as if she was quietly floating on a stream.

Lines 37—43. **Hovering beekke**—just as a bee in search of honey remains aloft flapping the wings before settling down to suck honey, so Mrs. Thompson waited in suspense. **Getting way**—herself wanting nothing would unnecessarily intrude upon others while entering shops. **Wafted on aim**—loitering aimlessly.

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Explanation. Looking at tempting things she goes about in the streets but cannot make up her

mind what purchases to make. Ultimately she enters a boot-shop.

Lines 44—59. **Every size**—that is a funny thing. **Bar and stud**—to fasten them, instead of having laces. **Scuffle**—struggle closely. **Bows**—which are fixed on pump shoes for ornamentation. **Sprinkled**—scattered. **“How any one things”**—Mrs. Thompson remarks to herself. **Loom**—appear larger than the real size. **Strange thick petalled bloom**—big flowers. **Misshapen**—because wild and big. **Sand-shoes**—shoes meant to be worn while walking on sands. **Clambering**—climbing with difficulty. **Spawning**—bringing forth; producing. **Awning**—a covering to shelter from the sun’s rays. **Barbarous bunches**—number of shoes tied together in clusters.

Explanation. The poet has introduced us to a boot-shop and has given a realistic description of the sight that meets our eyes there. All sorts of shoes are mentioned and also the way they are kept for show.

Lines 60—63. **O worldliness ! O vanity**—that such bright looking things should be used and patronised by any people. **Scarlet**—of red colour. **Plush**—see line 15 above. A pair of red velvety stress slippers fascinates Miss Thompson.

Lines 64—66. **Conscious blush face**—she knows that she is flushing and her face has become red. **Her thought ought**—as a ‘correct’ maid she should not have allowed herself to be tempted by such a fashionable-looking and pretty pair of slippers. She is ashamed of being attracted by that pair.

Lines 67—75. **Colour’s rapturous singing**—the pretty colour is still charming her. The temptation is still growing strong. **Answer ringing**—but she being a spinster how can she wear such a

pair. **O guardian**.....**improper**—the poets humorous remark.

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Bungles—does something clumsily. **Hanging jungles**—a large number of books on show. **Away from**.....**sense**—goes to the dim-lit part of the shop where she should not go as the smell of polish and tanned hide is there.

Explanation. These lines describe the temptation and her struggle to overcome.

Lines 76—85. **Slip-slop**—slovenly, shipshod. **Flat footed**—having flat feet. **Roll**—rolling gait. **Cough**—a mass of flow or meal moistened and kneaded but not baked. 'Dough-faced'—pliable; truckling. **Tow**—the coarse part of flax or hemp. Mrs. Watson may not herself be pretty-looking but the poets' description of her has all the charms of a fine presentation.

Lines 86—101. **Heart-a-flutter**—trembling in her heart. **Six and nine**—six shillings and nine pence. **Shudders down the spine**—feels a cold sensation all over her body as the price is so high. **Dream of**.....**romance**—such a thing can never be possible. **Torn between good and evil**—her mental struggle whether to purchase or not. **Strives with seven devils**—makes a supreme effort in overcoming the temptation. We are tempted by satan to leave the path of religion. **Soaring over earthly devils**—rising to a supreme height successfully combating the temptation. **Lingering**—unwilling to remove her hands from the pair.

Explanation. And so Miss Thompson triumphs over her temptation and leaves the shop without purchasing the pair of slipper though she likes them very much.

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Lines 102—128. **Subtler sense**—delicate sensitiveness to smell. **Knowing**—experienced. **Salt and fish**—fish caught from the sea and fresh water. **Cons**—examines critically. **Kippers**—salmons split open, seasoned and dried. **Cods**—another kind of fish famous for its liver oil. **Disposed upon the sill**—arranged on the board of the shop. **Sole**—a genus of flat fish. **Plaice**—broad flat fish. **Bloater**—having partially dried in smoke. **Haddock**—a sea fish of the cod family. **Smelt**—a fish of the salmon or trout family having a delicious flavour. **Slips**—small pieces or bits. **Trout**—another kind of fish. a genus of edible crustaceous allied to cobsters and crayfish. **Sheath**—the outer hard skin. **Crisp**—curling closely.

Explanation. In these lines a large number of fishes are described with their distinctive features. But more wonderful than any fish was the fishmonger himself.

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Lines 129—150. **Four Square**—stout and short. **Mouth to pinl**—he could drink large quantities of liquor. **Wheezy**—breathing with a hissing sound. **Whose apex round**—above his pot belly was a string going round like a belt. **Kepper's**—see line 110 above. **Yes, lovely weather**—it is a short brief reply by Miss Thompson to the fishmonger with whom she does not like to talk much.

Explanation. Here we have the picture of the fishmonger a figure as interesting as his wife. Miss Thompson is afraid of this bulky man. She closes the bargain at once, buys fish and hurriedly goes away.

Lines 151—156. **As one help blind**—with uncertain steps. **Things mind**—again she

felt the temptation to purchase the pair of slippers. **Fixed intent**—decisively.

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Popped them in—thrust suddenly in the basket.

Explanation. After all she could not resist the temptation and purchased the red pair of slippers.

Lines. 157—176. So much for that—that episode ends, the price is paid and the thing purchased. What next? **Tacked**—changed the course, as of a ship by shifting the position of the sails. **Still....**
.....act—showed signs of delight at her quick resolution and purchase. **Without**—out side. **Each with.....light**—shining inner part. **Limped**—clear. **Vague medicinal stink**—that strange smell, not particularly of any medicine but of all stoned in the shop of a chemist.

Explanation. Mrs. Thompson now visits the shop of a chemist where everything is neat and clean and medicines are properly labelled. A peculiar kind of fragrance pervades the shop.

Lines 177—200. Gamet—thin. **Skull like face**—emaciated.

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Wildest signs—prescriptions which a layman cannot read. **Undoubting**—never doubting the efficacy of the medicine. **Being from.....scepticism**—never questioned like people who always doubt. **In case of wind**—flatulence. **Clapped**—thrust or drove in the basket making some noise.

Explanation. In the chemists shop Miss Thompson does not talk much. The chemist is a grave sober man. It is doubtful whether she really wanted all the articles that she purchased.

Lines 201—210. Whither next—let us follow her

from the chemist's shop. **Your bearings lost**—she is a little upset and cannot make up her mind. **Then all comes back**—she recollects herself. **Grocer**—a dealer in tea, sugar etc. **Milliner**—one who makes head-dresses, bonnets, etc. for women. **Blouse**—a kind of loose-fitting bodice for women.

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Powers that be—the supernatural powers which guard us in times of danger or when we are inclined to commit a sin. **From crudeness and vulgarity**—let her not choose things from the milliners which might show her a woman of low or vulgar tastes.

Explanation. Then it is the turn of the grocer and the milliner. Miss Thompson does not want anything in particular from them. She desires to be tempted by nice things and then to purchase them.

Lines 211—222. **Enquiring nose**—as if by scent she can know the quality of things. **Prying and peering**—discovering with curiosity and peeping into things which are closed. **Oblivious**.....**home**—quite forgetful that she had to return home. **Brimmed up**—became full of. **Flit**—to fly quickly. **Ablur**—with dimmed vision ; dazzled. **Her small soul**.....**delights**—a small minded woman whom trinkets could please. **She should**.....**since**—when it is too she realizes her mistake in making so many purchases.

Lines 223—238. **Saw them star**.....**afar**—just as stars appear in the sky one after another after sunset, so Miss Thompson saw the lights in the town below quickly increasing in number. **Mapped beneath her**—from the heights she could see the streets as if drawn on a map. **Soul-uplifting stir**—Enthusiasm and delight that she felt on going to market and visiting its thronged streets. **The glory gone**—the charm of which the pretty articles exercised upon

her mind. **A small frail thing**—her own feeling of self-importance was also gone. Who was there at home who would admire her purchases and praise her for the bargains.

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Fill the . . . care—because there was none at home. **Came dropping . . . air**—the reference is not meteors or shooting stars, the meaning is that the light of stars began to fall there.

Explanation. How short-lived is the delight that she enjoyed in going to the market and making purchases.

Lines 239—242. **Sang the slippers**—when carrying her laden basket the sound which was made by its varried contents. **Answering thrills**—her heart responded joyously to that sound. Though she had spent much, she was happy that the pipers and slippers were with her.

Miss Thompson has, however, some consolation. Her heart rejoices in the possession of at least two articles. She has skippers to eat and velvety slippers to wear.

ROBERT GRAVES.

9. THE PASSING OF THE FARMER.

Life and work.—Robert Graves, English poet and author, is the son of A. P. Graves, the Irish songwriter, author of 'Father O' Flynn'. He was educated at Chesterhouse and at St. John's College, Oxford from where he took his B. Litt. degree. During the world war he served in France with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and was seriously wounded at Somme. He has published since 1915 many volumes of poetry and critical essays.

His poetical works are—*Over the Brazier* (1916) *Fairies and Fusiliers* (1917), *Country Sentiment* (1920), *The Pier Glass* (1921), *Whipperginny* (1922) *Feather Bed* (1923), and *Mock Beggar Hall* (1924).

His loose works are equally important and this number is also not small. His critical and other important prose works may be mentioned here: *On English Poetry* (1921) *Meaning of Dreams* (1924) *Poetic bureason and other Studi-s* (1925) *Contemporary techniques of Poetry John Kemp's Wager, Imperitability* (1926) *The English Ballad* ((1926), *Mr. Fisher* (1928) *Good Bye to All That* (1929), *A survey of Modernist Poetry* (1927) *Anthologies against Poetry* (1928) His poems have also been appearing simultaneously. *Poems* (1926-30). His last works are *the Read David Copperfield* and *Claudius* published in 1933.

Substance of the poem.—The farmer is on his death-bed and his cattle are meeting together discussing the situation. The ox is of opinion that the farmer himself is responsible for bringing about his end as he is a drunkard. Drink has ruined his body

and weakened his mind. The cow informs the company that the farmer's end is very near and thinks that none of them would be sorry when he died, because he did not improve the farm and the condition of his animals. The ass would have been happy if the farmer had died earlier. All the hopes of a better treatment which were entertained when he came in possession of the farm have been dashed to the ground. The ass continues his speech and advises his fellows to keep the news of the master's death a secret so that turkeys, ducks and geese may not know it, and the peaceful life of the farm may continue. The feathered can be easily deceived, suggests the ass, by telling them that was too busy elsewhere to be seen on the farm, and the affairs of the farm would be properly managed. But the poor poultry may come to know of it when the coffin would be carried by the pond. The ass desires that the life on the farm should continue but they should have no master to exact work from them. The stallion does not like the idea. He is afraid that in the absence of the master disorder will prevail and the management of the farm will suffer. He is well-fed and has no work to do and there is absolutely no reason to be dissatisfied with the master's treatment. It is clearly his interest to have a master if the present one died. The cow cuts short the argument by telling the company that one master always succeeds another, whether they like it or not. Their life of toil and hard work will remain the same, no matter who the master may be to take work from them. Even if at that time the new master treats them considerately they would be grateful.

Remarks on the poem.--We care for public opinion and are afraid to alienate it, but do we care at all for a moment to know what our own poor

cattle may be thinking of us ? These dumb creatures cannot even combine against us and go on a strike when discontented. Only if they could express their feelings they would say such things about us as we find the poet imagining here. They would realize their helplessness and have nothing complimentary to say about our treatment. So long as they can work they must toil for us ceaselessly and must be fed only because work is to be taken from them, and when they cannot work they must fill our belly. To assimilate them thus is the highest and the last reward for their services.

Even the change of master brings them no relief. Their lot is to toil. It would be wise on their part to entertain no hopes of improvement. All masters are alike for them. This poem is inspired by the same ideal as which the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to animals has. But it has a deeper significance also. The poem may be taken to represent in its own way the feelings of those who are politically mere belots in their own country. In this company the stallion is a Rai Bahadur. The difference of opinion due to their own selfish and individual interests making a combined action on impossibility, as we actually in the politics of a country, is also reflected. The ass is unwillingly heading towards anarchy as the stallion is blessing the *status quo*. A children's story is related in a manner as to convey a lesson of high morality. Those who have no power in their hands often deserve a better treatment than is usually given to them.

THE PASSING OF THE FARMER

Notes.

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Stanza 1. This breakdown—the farmer who is the owner of the ox and other animals is on his death-bed. **Drink**—in the opinion of the ox excessive drinking of wine is the cause. **That first**..... **dims**—the first effect of intoxication is to weaken intellect. **Staggers**—makes unsteady. **Trunk and limb**—the whole body.

Explanation. According to the ox the farmer's condition was due to his being a drunkard. Spirituous liquors dull the human reason and then cause general breakdown of the body.

Stanza 2. At this—hearing the opinion of the ox. **There is**.... **now**—the farmer will soon die. **Sip**—drink in small quantities.

Explanation. The farmer can neither speak nor take any liquid even in small quantities; he cannot live now, says the ass.

Stanza 3. But grief?—shall we mourn his loss? **Four-footed**—the quadrupeds, who have been introduced to us. **Though over**..... **slow**—we took a pretty long time to know our master's really selfish nature. We realized our position after a long time. **I doubt**..... **grief**—there will be none among them to mourn his loss. **Dodderer**—shaking and trembling farmer who was like a parasite to the animals.

Explanation. The ass was also of opinion that no quadruped would mourn the farmer's death though they took a long time to realize that he was not their benefactor.

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Stanza 4. For all his use—for all that he did for the animals. He might have **dead**—his death even at an earlier time would not have been mourned.

Explanation. The ass is of the opinion that during the time that the farmer owned the farm he spoiled it. If he had died earlier the farm would have suffered less.

Stanza 5. Hopeful forbears—the ancestors of the animals had hoped when the young farmer was born. **Proclaimed** **earth**—declared that the animals would be perfectly happy under the young master's regime.

Explanation. The ass complains that the hopes of a happier time for the animals which was proclaimed by their ancestors when the young farmer was born, had never been realized. The new master never made them happy.

Stanza 6. To ensure domestic peace—to avoid all quarrels and differences among the living creatures belonging to the dying farmer. **Turkey**—a large bird. **Proof-armoured** **fate**—fate could not kill him as he was quite safe against it.

Explanation. The ass also thinks it proper that other creatures, specially the birds should not be informed of the master's death. They should be told that he was deathless and was still governing them, and that no fate could injure him. This will ensure peace among them and save them from anarchy.

Stanza 7. **Largesse**—present or donation.

Explanation. Possibly the turkeys, etc. will miss him, then we shall admit it as fact that he was not seen tending or grazing his flock, nor was he seen giving corn to his animals with his usual liberality.

Stanza 8. Where best bestow—these days he may be favouring other animals elsewhere. He knows best what animals must be favoured. **To cultivate free-will**—to exercise self-determination or freedom of the will from restraint.

Explanation. The ass would satisfy those who would doubt his words by telling them falsely that the master had gone elsewhere for the exercise of his free-will but he had not left them for ever.

Stanza 9. Steward—the manager of the provision department. **Solemn rage**—in all seriousness or in an angry mood.

Explanation. The feathered race would be cheated by giving out that the master was in retirement busy with his ledgers, and accounts and that he was making all entries in a cheerful or angry mood. Still he was directing his servants to carry out his orders.

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Stanza 10. Dyke—a trench ; a mound raised to prevent innundation.

Explanation. The farmer still cares for his animals as usual. He is as much interested in their welfare as before and in his work on the fields.

Stanza 11. Glum—gloomy ; sullen. **Gloved**—covered with glove. **Undertaker**—one who manages funerals.

Explanation. But then there is one difficulty. From all the pet creatures of the feathered tribe the news of the farmer's death cannot be concealed. Others may be kept in ignorance of the farmer's death but poultry cannot be cheated ; because the poor poultry would be in a pitiable plight seeing the undertakers, with gloves on their hands, taking the coffin to the place of burial.

Stanza 12. Tilting—inclining by raising one end. **Ricks**—piles or heaps of hay. **Clamps**—heaps of produce, such as potatoes, covered over to prevent freezing. **Skirting**—bordering; turning at the margin of. **Midden-heap**—heap of ashes or dung. **Then out**—going even beyond that.

Explanation. They will also notice the coffin being taken in an inclined position beyond the pond, heaps of hay and crops and outside the yard. Then the undertakers will, taken a turn round the ash heap, take the coffin to a place which the poultry will fail to guess.

Stanza 13. Stallion—an uncastrated male horse kept for breeding. **I deplore**—it is quite right for the stallion to mourn the farmer's death; because he is not a pack horse. He is well fed and has no hard work to do. Other animals, of course, have heavy work. **Figure-head**—master at the head of all; the controlling authority. **Moving**—going on with its routine work.

Explanation. The ass had said that there was no animal likely to be sorry at the death of the farmer. The stallion is an exception. Personally he can have nothing to complain as he is kept with all care, is well-fed and has absolutely no work to do as he is meant for breeding horses. But he shows his concern because the farm requires a master to supervise it. Without the farmer there is bound to be confusion all round and the farm itself may break up.

Stanza 14. Tut—An exclamation of rebuke or impatience. **He's gone**—after the death of the farmer. **The farm life on**—the daily routine life of the farm will remain unaffected and continue as before. **Routine he came**—the regular course of duties and the unvarying round of work was the

same years before this farmer found himself in charge of things.

Explanation. The cow rebukes the stallion because the latter is afraid that the death of the farmer will break up the farm. So far as the animals are concerned the change of master is not going to relieve them from the unvarying round of toil. They have been plodding a long time since the present master came upon the scene. Their lot is not going to change for the better.

Stanza 15. Interregna—plural of interregnum—the time between the cessation of one and the establishment of another government; the time between two reigns. **Fruitful**—productive of. **Though blows**—it is true that history gives abundant examples of anarchy and disruption of states in the time between two reigns. **New masters died**—one king succeeds another and there is always some one to govern the subjects. The death of a rule does not end the subjection of the people.

Explanation. It is true, says the cow, that there are many instances recorded in history of anarchy, civil strife and insurrections taking place in times between two reigns. But it must be remembered that, as a matter of fact, after things have settled down one ruler succeeds another, and the subjects always find themselves under the yoke of some powerful person.

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Stanza 16. Headstone—the stone at the head of a grave on which inscriptions are recorded. **His rise fall**—the inscription on the tombstone. In earlier days of his assumption of rule he proved a better man than at the end of his time. He started well, whatever may have happened afterwards. **This**

next reign—the regime of the dead farmer's successor. The sentence is left incomplete, because the cow is not sure that the new master will in any way be better than the old one. **Hush now**—let our discussion come to an end. Silence. **The passing bell**—the bell in the church is sounding at the death of the master.

Explanation. On the tombstones of masters the usual need of praise is inscribed and it is that their rule was better and more considerate in the beginning than it was at the end. But it is yet to be seen whether the new farmer will give a good treatment to the animals even when he assumes power. It should be enough if it were so, though it is doubtful. The discussion abruptly comes to a close as the passing bell of the church is heard ringing at the death of the farmer.

EDITH WHARTON.

10. ORPHEUS.

Life and work.—Edith Newbold Wharton, American writer, daughter of George and Lucretia Jones was born in New York city in 1862. She was educated at home. She spent most of her later time in Italy and France. In 1885 she married Edward Wharton, a Boston banker. She began her literary career by contributing short stories and poems to Scribner's Magazine. *The House of Mirth* definitely established her reputation in 1905. *Ethan Frome* (1911), a short novel, can be compared to the work of Hawthorne in the grimness of its tragedy of New England love and its frustration. She has a fine sense of character and technique, and her irony is pungent. She ranks high in American literature. Her long stay in Europe resulted in a number of works on travel, *Italian Villas and their Gardens* (1904), being one of them deserving mention. Her fame mainly rests upon her novels and short stories. These include *Crucial Instances* (1901), *The Fruit of the Tree* (1907), *Xingu and other stories* (1916), *The Age of Innocence*, *A Son at the Front* (1923). *Twilight Sleep*, another novel appeared in 1927.

Characteristics.—Mrs. Edith Wharton is known in modern literature as a thoughtful American novelist. Her stories and novels are above the common literature of the day. Some of her well-known tales like *The Greater Inclination*, *Crucial Instances* and *The Ascent of man*, turn on mental processes and clash of moral motives. Her main interest lies equally in the plot and the clash of ideals. They relate the tragedy

of misunderstanding and illusion, and of the irony of circumstances. These themes are notably present in her poems also. She is introspective and mind to her is everything, and the other incidents a mere reflect of the inner experience. *The House of Mirth*, her most characteristic work shows the tragedy of a woman of fine education and taste drown into tragedy for want of money and her inability to marry a social and intellectual inferior. Her love for classical themes and their adaptations for modern readers are most probably due to her love for Italy and travels in European countries.

Substance of the Poem.—Orpheus the Harper has lost his wife and he resolves to bring her back from the dark infernal regions where the souls of the dead reside. He goes to the warder of Hades and begs admission to meet Eurydice for whom he professes great love. He complains that she was forcibly taken away from him by the cruel Fates.

In Hades like all other countless spirits Eurydice is also living a solitary life. Her ghost is speechless and can hear no human voices there; while on the earth the young Orpheus keenly feels her separation and in his misery he is prepared to suffer anything in order to bring her back to life.

The warder says to Orpheus that many a man would talk of laying down his life to save that of one dear to him. But he is afraid of going to Hades. In his alarm he desires to return back to his life upon earth and feels its fascination more strongly than ever. He even forgets the sombre and dark side of life and longs to live it again.

The harper replies that he is a lover and life upon earth without his Eurydice had no attraction for him, and he is sure that she too is equally unhappy

without him. The warder admits him in Hades where he finds countless souls but not one of them can speak. He manages to find out the ghost of Eurydice who recognizes him, but instead of showing any eagerness to return back with him and enjoy the pleasures of the world she prefers to have peace and rest. She also informs him that her life cannot be restored unless he gave his own in return. But that she does not like as he must live. Orpheus finds it useless merely to exchange places because then too reunion will remain an impossibility. He yet hopes that the gods will grant his prayer and allow Eurydice to return to the earth with him. She corrects his mistake and assures him that the gods are exacting before they grant any boon. She requests him to return back and leave her alone. If he cares to make her immortal let him sing of her and then she will live upon the earth in his songs. This, however, does not satisfy Orpheus and he tries to take her out of Hades by cheating the warder. But when he reaches first outside the gate he finds that she has suddenly vanished and his attempt has been frustrated.

Now the warder, mocking his attempted subterfuge, tells him that only one instance has happened in which a deceased person's soul was allowed to return back to the earth. Alcestis offered her life for her husband and the latter was given by the gods another lease of life. But not till Alcestis herself made the supreme sacrifice. But the gods, admiring her love which even death could not kill, allowed her to return to the earth and live with her husband. They found that the confinement in Hades chained her spirit but could not conquer love. But the warder says to Orpheus that his love being selfish his wife will not be sent back from Hades.

Orpheus returns back to the earth and is glad to be once more amidst the old familiar surroundings.

Remarks on the poem.—Mrs. Wharton has taken old mythological story but in giving it a new version and altering some details of the original she has emphasised one particular aspect of it and has created a psychological interest. There is no doubt that Orpheus loves Eurydice but he deceives himself as to the intensity of the passion. Until and unless there is an opportunity for testing love no body can be sure of the sacrifice that one would make for its sake. It is easier to profess love for a person more than for one's own life. But how many can make, if the time came, the supreme sacrifice to save another for whom love is so loudly professed.

It is a truism but so often forgotten that man's love has an element of selfishness. We love a person because we like him and find him loveable. It satisfies a yearning of our heart to love. But there is another kind of love in which the lover has no thought of himself. And this is the highest form of this noble sentiment. On such sublime heights love becomes spiritualized and then it conquers all, even death. Mrs. Wharton has clearly brought out the distinction between selfish love and the true or sublime love without the best trace of selfishness. Such pure love elevates the soul of the lover and, we may say, defies him.

In this poem the interest lies more in the clash of ideals than in the narration, though there are fine descriptive passages. The interview between Orpheus and Eurydice has a dramatic interest and the disillusionment of the former has a mild tragic touch. Love does conquer all but its triumph lies in perfect self-effacement.

ORPHEUS.

Notes.

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Orpheus.—A mythical personage, regarded by Greeks as the most celebrated of the poets who lived before the time of Homer. The common story about him is that Orpheus, the son of Æagrus and Calliope, lived in Thrace and accompanied the Argonauts on their expedition. Presented with lyre by Apollo and instructed by the Muses in its use, he enchanted with its music not only the wild beasts, but the trees and rocks upon Olympus, so that they moved from their places to follow the sound of his golden harp.

Alcestis—wife of Admetus King of Thessaly. Apollo had prevailed Fates to grant to Admetus deliverance from death, if his father, mother or wife would die for him. Alcestis died in his stead, but was brought back from the lower world by Hercules.

The story of Admetus was made the subject of one of the most famous of the plays of Euripides, *The Alcestis*. Also see Browning's *Baloustiou's Adventure*.

Plato—the renowned Greek philosopher (429-347 B. C.) He was Socrates's disciple and Aristotle's teacher. His *Discourses* and his *Republic* are among the greatest works of the ancients.

Lines 1-12—Orpheus the Harper—see note above.

Gate—of the nether world or Hades where the spirits of the dead reside. **Implacable**—inexorable; one who cannot be appeased or reconciled. **Dim wardar**—the gatekeeper of the Hades. He must be dim because belonging to the nether world. **Sate**—sat. **Besought for parley**—earnestly requested him to allow a little talk. **A shade within**—the spirit of a departed person now in Hades. **Dearar . . . been**—Orpheus claims to have loved his wife even more than his own life.

We shall see how far this claim was true. **Illyrian sea**—the sea near Illyricum. Illyricum is its widest signification, all the land west of Macedonia and east of Italy, extending south as far as Epirus and north as far as the vallays of the Savus and Dravus and the junction of these rivers with the Danube. **Myrtle**—an evergreen shrub with beautiful and fragrant leaves. **Laden**—carrying honey. **Whom**—his wife, Eurydice. **Unconsenting breast**—he unwilling to part from her ; forcibly. **The Fates**—the three goddesses of fate, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, who determined the birth, life and death of men. **At some** **behest**—unreasonable command the consequences of which were not considered. **Intolerably**—unbearably. **Reft**—removed ; separated. **Eurydice**—Orpheus' wife. After his return from the Argonautic expedition, Orpheus took up his abode in Thrace, where he married the nymph Eurydice. His wife having died of the bite of a serpent, he followed her into the abodes of Hades. Here the charms of his lyre suspended the torments of the damned souls and won back his wife from the most inexorable of all duties. His prayer, however, was only granted upon this condition, that he should not look back upon his restored wife till they had arrived in the upper world ; at the very moment when they were about to cross the fatal bounds, the anxiety of love overcame the poet ; he looked round to see that Eurydice was following him ; and he beheld her caught back into the infernal regions. **Dear to the sunlight**—the sun felt happy to shine upon her. **Unaccompanied**—without the company of Orpheus ; all alone.

Explanation. Orpheus seeks the permission of the inexorable gate-keeper of the infernal regions to go in and speak to his dear wife Eurydice whose spirit re-

sides there. He claims that she is dearer to him than the sunshine on the Illyrian sea, fragrance of myrtle on the murmur of the honey-laden bee. She has recently been snatched away from him by the Fates, who cruelly carried out an unreasonable command and took her away to a solitary tomb.

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Lines 13--24. Stygian tide—the Styx was a stream encircling the Greek Hades seven times. Spirits entering Hades were compelled to cross this stream and once they had done so they could not return. **Strayed her feet**—wandered. **The shadow own**—she was like her husband's shadow because they were constant companions. But now she was alone. **Each phantom alone**—though there are countless spirits yet each has to remain quite lovely; they are solitary in a crowd. **No more rest**—while in this world she rested her head upon his breast when sleeping, but in Hades there is no such comfort or companionship. **Swift ear**—quick to catch sound, especially musical notes. **Disvoiced throats**—throats of the spirits which could utter no sound; devoid of speech and sound. **One echo notes**—the voice of Orpheus, of course, could not be heard there; but there was no sound even like his own. **Dreaming nightly**—in the darkness of night he could only picture to himself. **Pallid doom**—pale, wan condition. **No solace bloom**—his own youth did not comfort him. As a young man, throbbing with life and vigour he could have overcome his sorrow. But it was not to be. **But yearned veins**—he eagerly desired to impart her life and warmth by pouring his own blood into her body. **Buy her back**—make the necessary sacrifice in regaining her.

Unimagined pains—sufferings which we cannot even imagine.

Explanation. In the infernal region where there were already countless spirits she felt absolutely lovely on the bank of the Styx. Her spirit was quite solitary though in the midst of a crowd of spirits. She had no peaceful repose as on earth, nor could she hear any human voice there. Orpheus, in this world, was passing uneasy nights imagining her wan and pale condition. Though a young man, he found no charm in life and he only desired to impart his own warmth of blood to her and any how win her back with whatever sacrifices he may be called upon to make.

Lines 26-36—The shepherd of the shadow—the keeper of the gate leading to the infernal regions. **Shadow**—spirits. **Many thus.....dead**—many bereaved persons would be glad if they could persuade the keeper to restore their dead relatives. **Fatal gateway clang**—the sound of the gate closed upon the dead. **Life quivers in them.....pang**—they desire that they had not been dead and brought to that place. They become painfully conscious of the final parting from life. **Sweet pang**—pain because of separation from this world, but at the same time sweet, because the life in the world was not quite happy and there is a prospect of new experience. **They see the.....trees**—they remember their home. **Cordage**—a quantity of cords, or ropes, as the rigging of a ship. **Whistles**—they seem to bear the sound of the wind passing through ropes and sails. **Grows dear**—they grow eager to be there again. **Tread no more**—because death will not allow them to return to their old places. **On their threshold lies**—which they seem to see when departing life. **With.....eyes**—they seem to find in the eyes of their dog the same look which they saw in their childhood. **Melancholy**

fall—sombre atmosphere of the evening. **They read** **sunrise**—even the darker aspects of life seem to possess a charm and freshness.

Explanation. When Orpheus entreated the gate-keeper, who was in charge of spirits, to give him entrance the latter told him that many persons would be happy if their dear dead ones could thus be restored to them. But when they hear the sound of the closing gate they become nervous and afraid. Then they remember their life in the world and the surroundings in which have been living and feel a pang thinking of eternal separation. They seem to see their pet dog looking at them with the eye of affection reminding them of their childhood. Even the sombre aspects of life appear to them full of hope and freshness.

Lines 37—44. Not thus I—Orpheus proudly asserts that he was not of the ordinary of mankind. His love for Eurydice was so great that he would not care for the world. **Smiled his scorn**—said and smiled in derision. **I see no path** **worn**—for him the world does not exist except that part of it which is hallowed by her feet. **My roof** **hair**—his house is good because its tree reminds him of her hair.

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And the light **grave**—for him sunrise is no beautiful phenomenon as compared to the light of her eyes beaming after their separation. He would rather see the light of her eyes than the rise of the sun. **Doubly dead** **grave**—her death is a double tragedy because not only she is in grave but also separated from him. **If my feet** **before**—if I had predeceased her. **Had found** **shore**—would have found dark and dismal without me, as she finds death now.

Explanation. Orpheus smiles at the gate-keeper scornfully because he felt his love for Eurydice insulted. He was not like ordinary men who would shirk to follow their beloved in Hades, because ultimately their love of life in this world overcame their desire for reunion. For him the world was of no consequence excepting so far as it was associated with the memory of Eurydice. No pathways, fascinate him unless they be these hallowed by her feet; no house he likes to live in but that which reminds him of her. Even the light of the morning sun he would spurn for the light of her eyes in despair. He is sure that she is also unhappy in her grave for his separation and she could not live in the desolate world if he had left her a widow.

Lines 45—50. The gate clanged on him—he was admitted after his professions of love. **Alien millions**—countless spirits whom he did not know. **Mute and grey**—the spirits were speechless and not very distinct or bright in colour. **Swept like strand**—the spirits were like a mist which floats on a dark sea-shore. **Nameless wreckage**—mass of broken things and wrecked material lying in heaps on shore. **Gluts**—supplies in excess. **Stealthy**—because any number of things may lie half-buried in sand on shore. **Drift**—things which are driven ashore by the waves of the sea. **Cockle**—a large heart-shaped ribbed shell. **Foundered**—wrecked. **Rock of death**—death is compared to a rock on which the ship of life is wrecked. Hades is the shore where the spirits are driven. The wreckage consists of their hopes and fears.

Explanation. Orpheus enters Hades and its gates are closed upon him. He finds these countless souls all speechless and indistinct and not one known to him. They appear to him a cold mist moving on a

dark sea-shore. Just as on the shore heaps of wreckage of foundered ships are lying upon sands and sea shells are driven there by the waves, so the spirits of men were crowding in Hades after their death, and the only reminiscence of their life upon earth was then hope and faith which still clung to them.

Lines 51—70. Image he sought—the spirit of Eurydice. In her present condition she is only a shadow of her real self, and so she is called 'image'. **Less living thought**—she was so different from what he had known her as a living being. **In his thought**—as she existed in his memory. **Summons notes**—when he called her out in a loud tone and which sent a thrill through her. **Drew back to life surface**—the presence of Orpheus there caused a little stirring in her. But it was not life that his presence had brought to her. She was dead and remained so. Just as a drowned person sometimes comes up to the surface of water but does not gain life, so Eurydice showed signs of a flutter when Orpheus met her in Hades. **Yet no less is dead**—the body may float and become visible to the eye but the man is dead. **Cold fear smote him**—his enthusiasm and joy in meeting her were chilled. Because she behaved so differently from what he had imagined. **Lay mine**—give the warmth of your love. **Libation**—the pouring forth of wine or other liquid in honour of a deity. **Pour thy like wine**—just as wine is poured in honour of a deity so Orpheus is prepared to pour forth his life blood for the sake of Eurydice. He is prepared to give his own life to rescue her from death. **Through thee**—with the help of Orpheus. **Traverse arms**—enjoy again the life in the world as once she did. **Kindle these warms**—revive old associations and feel the zest of life which in Hades is not possi-

ble. **Nay**—let it not be so. **Death's shadowy substitute**—that which resembles death like the shadow of a substance. **Give me rest**—instead of a life of rapturous delight and frenzied enjoyments which she had in life with him, she would now like to have peace or rest, which is like the shadow of death.

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Then join throng—you go back to the world and live there among people happily. **And give me song**—she does not want to go back to the world of the living but asks her husband to go back there and live happily among people. And if he wants her to return back to life, she would like to be commemorated in her songs and not by going back there. **Give it in song**—make me immortal in your verse and thus prolong my life in the world. **For only to the dead**—for unless you give your own life to get mine restored, it is not possible for me to be rescued from death. Orpheus has come to take her back with him to the world, but this is not possible. He must die for her then she may be allowed to go back from Hades. **I would have thee live**—this is the triumph of the woman's love. She would not like her husband to sacrifice his life for her.

Explanation. Ultimately Orpheus was able to find her out. But she appeared quite different from what she was on earth. Hearing his voice she felt a little flutter, but life did not come back to her. Just as a drowned man's body rises to the surface of the water but life does not revive, so did she appear to be stirred by his presence without regaining life. Orpheus became afraid in the presence of the spirit as it was not what he has expected to meet. Then she asked him if he had come to take her back to the world and

regain life for her. Would he desire that she should again lead the same kind of life in the world as she did before. But this idea she would not like. She preferred peace to the zest of life. If he cared to keep her alive in the world he should go back there and immortalize her in his poetry. For it was not possible for her to go out of Hades unless he himself died for her and that she would never allow him to do.

Lines 71-76. **Fear**.....**arms**—her embrace was not so close as the grief of fear he now felt. **Not so**—it would not be necessary for him to die for her life. They both would be together. **I sought**.....**again**—his purpose in seeking her was not that they should be separated again. **Fresh joy**.....**again**—separation and pangs of death should now end in new joy. **And the gods**.....**asking take**—it may be difficult to appease gods but once they are pleased they bestow all their gifts upon them, who gladly take whatever the gods grant.

Explanation. Hearing these words of Eurydice he was greatly alarmed. He had gone to Hades to win her back and bring her to the joyous life of the world after their reunion and her rescue from death. He could not brook the idea of another separation. He assured her that the gods once appeased grant all their gifts to those who accept them without any question.

Lines 77-87. **So runs**.....**lore**—life's experience since ages has been. **The gods**.....**takes**—all that man gets comes as a gift from the gods. **But always**.....**score**—but never without taking something in return. **Score**—reckoning; debt. **Eumenides**—or Furies, were the avenging deities, three hideous winged maidens who pursued and punished the guilty. The literal meaning of 'Eumenides' is

kindly people. In order to oppose and avert their wrath they were often called by this name. **When heard breeze**—the wrath of Furies can best be known to those who have become their victim. **Paying my meed of pain**—suffering to which I am doomed must be accounted for and if not some one else must suffer for me. **Cold lips**—because of the spirit. **Tender ghost of the dear kiss**—kiss without its warmth and throb of life. Ghost of the kiss is a fine idea when it is a mere semblance or shadow of the warm kiss of loving persons. **Hands of fire**—because of a living and passionate man. **A new lyre**—even better than one given by gods. **That in thy voice**—through your song my heart may speak out. **And something rejoice**—she may still enjoy a life on earth, though very imperfectly, while yet remaining in Hades.

Explanation. Eurydice removes the misapprehension of Orpheus because that has ever been the experience of man since ages that, though all things enjoyed by him are gifts from the gods, they always claim their due from men. The gods never grant free gifts to men below. The wrath of Furies may be a mere talk among those who have never fallen victim to it. She cannot go back to the world unless he is prepared to suffer death and pain in her place. She advises him to go back to the world after kissing her cold lips and dropping her cold hand. There endearments cannot impart their warmth to her spirit now. But one thing he can surely do. Of her heart-strings he can make a new lyre so that playing upon it he will enable her to live in his songs and in this way she will enjoy a kind of life in the world in the memories of the people.

Lines 89—112. Shuddering her—because he had not expected all this from her. **But with close-**

flung **swarm**—Orpheus held her closely and pulled her to himself through the crowd of spirits, though she herself was unwilling to be so drawn. **Glide past**—escaped unnoticed.

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He whirled her with him—he turned round rapidly clasping Eurydice. **Lighter than leaf**—she being a spirit was as light as a leaf. **Unwillingly**—unknowingly. **Brief autumnal eddy**—mild current of air as we have in autumn. **Yielded** **more**—when Orpheus became a normal human living being as soon as he came out of the gate. Even a short visit to Hades had made him something like a spirit. **Issuing** **skies**—coming under the skies assuring him of his return from Hades. **He turned** **eyes**—he looked into her eyes with the hope of finding them beaming again with life, because in Hades they had become lustreless. **He clutched at emptiness**—he found that she had suddenly vanished. **The wonder wrought**—that a dead person was brought out of Hades and restored to life and the world. **But**—only. **Alcestis**—see note on page 44. **Her master**—Admetus, King of Thessaly. **Living she sought him not**—herself living she did not try to restore her husband to life. She sacrificed her own life to regain his. **Nor dreamed** **my gate**—she did not imagine for a moment that any clever trick on her part would open the gates of Hades for her husband to escape from the nether world. **Subterfuge**—evasion; that to which one resorts for escape or concealment. **Loving** **death**—because was truly in love with her husband she willingly laid down her life for his restoration. **Livid**—black and blue; of a lead colour; discoloured. Death is called 'livid' because the man in its grip loses his colour. **Joyous she** **heart**—gladly she obtained his temporary release

from death by sacrificing her own life. **Respite**—interval of rest; temporary suspension of the execution of a criminal. **Came**—to Hades. **Not embodied**—not with the body of a living human being. **Tenuous shade**—thin slender spirit without body. **In whom** **made**—but her slender shadowy form was beaming with light, because she was happy at her successful sacrifice for her beloved husband. Her spirit was invested with a glory born of joy. **This shore**—the bank of the Styx. **Shine with** . . . **ecstasy**—so radiant with joy. **An exile from the light above**—a person sent to the infernal region from this earth after his death. **Hail me** **smiles**—the departed souls can never, of course, like the gate-keeper of Hades. But Alcestis seemed happy to have met him. **Thou art** . . . **love**—to her the gate-keeper was love incarnate and not death as other souls found him.

Explanation. Eurydice gave reasons for her inability to return to the world. Orpheus was not prepared to give his life to regain hers and without this it was impossible for her to leave Hades. Orpheus had not come to face such a disappointment and so he was alarmed to hear her words. He immediately pulled her to his side, through the throng of spirits, though she resisted and hiding her in his cloak wanted to slip away through the gate silently and without being noticed by the warder. Her spirit was very light and he could carry it as easily and swiftly as a gust of wind in autumn whirls away a dried leaf. But immediately he came out of the gate and felt like a normal man under the skies he discovered that she had suddenly vanished. When he turned round to find the beaming light in her eyes which had become lustreless she was seen no more there. The warder knew his discomfiture

and told him the one single instance in which a soul from Hades had been able to go back to the earth, but it was miraculous. When Alcestis came seeking for her husband Admetus, she did not come a living person and never thought for a moment that she could rescue him by cheating the warder, as was just attempted by Orphens. Because she loved her husband she sacrificed her own self for his sake and died to save him. Though Admetus could not be made immortal and her sacrifice could bring him to the earth only for a short time, she did not hesitate to regain his life. She rejoiced at her death and came to Hades like a thin pale spirit, but it was radiant with joy. The warder never saw a ghost on the bank of Styx so happy nor even did any spirit of a deceased man hailed him as love and not as abhorred Death. Otherwise never a soul had been allowed to return to the earth once the doors were clanged upon it.

Lines 113—126. **Frustrated**—foiled ; defeated or baffled. Because the purpose of death was defeated. Death had no power upon Alcestis. **Living still**—not dead. **How, living still she dwelled**—through living in Hades with the spirits of the deceased human beings, she was still alive. Death had no effect upon her though she had come to the nether world. **Because she won**—because Alcestis was living with her husband whose life she had won for him. Though her spirit was present in Hades she existed, like a living being, with her husband in the world. **And her blood sun**—she was still in the world of human beings her blood coursing through the body of her husband. **They**—the gods. **Stygian wave**—see note on line 13. **The sweetness love**—love survives death, the feeling of love subsists even when the soul leaves the world and the object of affection. **Lave**—wash. **Lethe**—this is a

river in Hades The spirits of the dead have to cross it on their way to Hades from the earth. Immediately they cross it the spirits forget all about their lives in the world. So it is called the river of forgetfulness. **When the pale thought**—when Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, fails to obliterate from the mind of man one single sublime and everlasting idea of love. Love cannot be washed away from the mind even when man has crossed the Lethe.

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Akin to us grows—then man becomes like a god. The gods are immortal and man's one sublime idea also is immortal, as his love continues even after death and so he partakes of the nature of gods. **Since nature knows**—we must be conscious of the pain if we are made to suffer. There can be no unconscious pain. If man were to partake of the nature of the gods he too would become immune to pain. If Alcestis while in Hades remains unaffected by its sufferings then she feels no pain. **Grey desert**—Hades or the infernal regions where there is no light of the sun. **Banned**—sentenced to banishment. **Still dreams land**—does not feel the separation from her husband and imagines that she is still with him in this world of sunshine. **That tear**—which world she gladly left for his sake. **Set wide the gates**—the ban must be lifted and she must be set free. **Her being is not here**—her spirits may be in Hades but her heart and her whole being is with her husband.

Explanation. The warder continues his story of Alcestis. When the gods saw that the purpose of death had failed in the case of Alcestis, and they had no power over her, because though her spirit was confined in Hades she, as a matter of fact, was

yet living with her husband, whose life she had saved, in the world, and her own blood courted through his veins, they began to discuss the matter seriously. They discovered that Alcestis kept alive her love for her husband and had not forgotten it even after crossing the Lethe. The sublime sentiment of love was constantly present in her mind like an immortal thought, and as she was quite unconscious of my sufferings or pains of Hades she did not suffer at all there. She seemed to them one like themselves immune from pain and terrors of Hades. If their own decree of death and banishment to Hades had thus been nullified by her love and she always felt the constant companionship of her husband in the land of sunshine then the ban must be lifted. The ban had failed to confine her to Hades. Better she was allowed to go where she really was and restored to her husband body and soul.

Lines 127—130. So ruled the gods—they reversed their own order of death. **That sought'st for love**—Orpheus who is prepared to sacrifice his life for his wife. **Yet for thyself wouldst live**—but he loves his wife for his own sake and not for her sake alone. His love is selfish. He loves her for the sake of union, whereas Alcestis loved her husband for his sake alone. **They know not for their kin**—the gods will not allow Orpheus to claim any kinship with them. **But back give**—they send him back to the world without restoring his wife. **Mortal birth**—an ordinary human being, not exalted to the position of the gods by pure and unselfish love.

Explanation. The gods thus altered their decree and restored Alcestis to her husband because her banishment and death had failed to separate her from her husband. But Orpheus cannot be treated

in the same manner, because though he is prepared to give up his life for the sake of his wife, yet his love is selfish, he loves her for the sake of union and not absolutely for her life. The gods cannot allow such a person to be exalted to their position or claim kinship with them. Orpheus must return back to the earth, without his wife, because he is a mere mortal whose selfish love has failed to deify him.

Lines 131—136. **Humbled heard**—Orpheus heard the sentence with a sense of humiliation. **Turned away**—from Hades, leaving his wife. **Mounting**—from the nether world he would have to go upwards to reach the earth. **Empoverished**—made poor. The day has been called 'empoverished' as it was drawing to a close. **Stygian shades**—the dim region of Hades encircled by the Styx. **He heard trees**—the idea of lines 29-30 is repeated here. The familiar objects of the world began to exercise their fascination upon him. When he went to Hades to win back his wife, his life in the world seemed desolate and dull. His one interest was to bring his wife back. Though he is frustrated in his attempt yet he is neither sorrowful nor the world appears to him without its charms. **And in . . . glad of these**—whatever he may be saying about his sorrow, separation and disappointment within his heart of hearts he was happy to find himself on this earth. These concluding lines clearly bring out the fact that Orpheus' governing principle of life was pleasure and not sacrifice. He did love his wife but only for one reason that it advanced his own happiness. If he had been a true lover on his return the world would not appear a comfortable place to live in and life would have proved a greater burden.

Explanation. Orpheus felt humiliated to hear these words of the warder. He left the place and began his ascent to the earth where the day was departing at that time. When he left the banks of the Stygian river and its dark regions he heard the wind blowing on the harbour rushing through the coils and sails of ships and also saw in his imagination the familiar surroundings and scenes of his time upon the earth. This proved the warder's statement true. Instead of feeling lovely without his wife and disappointed at his failure to win her back, he felt a secret joy to be back on this earth.

W. B. YEATS.

11. THE GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID.

Life and Work.—William Butler Yeats, Irish author, poet and dramatist, was born at Sandy Mount near Dublin on June 13, 1865. His father J. B. Yeats was a distinguished artist. Yeats went to London but most of his leisure was spent in the country of Sligo the charms of the mountains and lakes of which are alluded to by him so often in his works. At first he began as a painter but his taste was in literature, and in 1889 he published his book of poems *The Wanderings of Oisín*. He was one of the founders of Rhymer's Club. In 1892 he published his first poetic play *The Countess of Cathleen*, and two years later appeared *The Land of Heart's Desire*. With Edin J. Ellis he edited the works of William Blake in 1893.

By 1897 he was interested in the formation of an Irish theatre, and with the help of Lady Gregory, Edward Martin and others the first performance of the theatre was given in Dublin. To this end he contributed many noble plays. He also wrote lyrics and rewrote his earlier works. His most noteworthy volumes since 1897 are *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899); *Responsibilities* (1914); *The Wild Swans at Coolie* (1917); *Later Poems* (1922), and *The Tower* (1927). His literary and critical essays are to be found in the volumes. *Ideas of Good and Evil* (1903); *The Cutting of an Agate* (1912); *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* (1919) and many others on theatre notably in the volume *Plays and Controversies* (1924). He dreamt of establishing a verse theatre in Ireland, but the attempt had to be given up as the Irish genius prefers the realis-

tic. But *The Countess of Athleen* and the one act play *The Land of Heart's Desire* are undoubtedly successful plays. His dramatic works include *The King's Threshold* (1904), *On Baile's Strund* (1904), and *The Green Helmet* (1910). His next play *The Player Queen* was in prose.

As a poet his career falls into three periods: the early, the middle, and the late. His early poems are elaborate and richly wrought and influenced by Pre-Reaphaelites. Then his inspiration became national and *Poems written in Discouragement* (1913) are the result of his inspiration. *Responsibilities* a year later struck a new note as he finally discarded embroidery for embroidery's sake. *The Wild Swan at Coolie* and *The Tower* mark his third period. His poetry is obscure at times but it is a part of his own difficult philosophy. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1923. Indians feel grateful to him for introducing Tagore to the English readers.

Characteristics as a Poet.—W. B. Yeats incarnates the spirit of Celtic revival though he has been surpassed by many others of his group in each of the activities. He has an inborn gift of practical wisdom and inspires others with a common hope and ideal for the literary revival of Ireland which began towards the close of the last century.

Before this new outburst of enthusiasm for Irish themes in literature Yeats had finished his hopeful career as a poet. His first lyrics appeared between the years 1889—1899. But then his inspiration came not directly from life but from books. He saturated his mind in mystic tale, legend and song and so his earlier lyrics are not distinctive of his genius. There is, however, a marked tendency towards the stereotyping of mystical ideas. We can trace the develop-

ment of the tendency from the simple early lyrics to his mature works.

The mystic inspiration of Yeats has been attributed to the influence of Maeterlinck, love of Irish myth and folklore. Both the poets have created a nebulous haven of peace in a vague and metaphysical region and the refinements of external life. But *The Wandering of Oisín* and *Countess Cathleen* were written before Maeterlinck was known on this side of the channel. Moreover Yeats shows no familiarity with vague terror which is the characteristic of the other poet. His inspiration comes from Celtic legends, oriental tale, Blake and the French Symbolists, and he breathes only in the atmosphere of intellectual and literary concepts and in this he is the fellow of Maeterlinck.

The note of mysticism finds free, constant expression in the poems of Yeats, sometimes it busies with fairy fancies, now with an idea more abstract and remote, and now with some aspect of unhappy love. Even his love poetry is steeped in moonlight. The trident sun and his joy of life are too virile and too fierce for this pale world that is 'dim with dreams and glimmering with fairy feet'. His poems are the expression of true Celtic spirit which embodies the sense of infinite longing, something remote and unattainable, of wistfulness and melancholy, and of a sort of home-sickness of the soul. The loveliest flower of this creed is *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*. Whether we consider it the call of an Irish exile to his motherland, or the inmost voice of Celtic sadness and of Celtic longing for infinite things or the soul of all humanity crying like a lost child.

"The poet of dreams, of patriotism and proud humility, of old legend and song, of sweet sorrow and

bitter joy, of a land and a people beyond the world—this indeed is the poet of Ireland (Mary C. Sturgeon).

Substance of the Poem.—Kusta Ben Luka interested in mystic studies writes a confidential letter to his friend Abd Al-Rabban, who is the treasurer of Harun Al-Rashid, the great Caliph. As the letter contains a great secret he requests that it may safely be kept in the archives near the Treatise of Parmenides as this book is very highly prized and the letter would be safe there till it falls in the hands of a learned man who will come to know the mystery.

That very year in which Harun slew his vizir Jaffer, the former came to Luka and sitting in his garden had a private conversation with him. In those days Harun had grown young again and people did not know how it happened. Kusta Ben Luka was till then an unmarried man. He was devoted to the study of mysterious subjects and had not found a girl of his choice. According to his principles a man should marry only once as it was his belief that the marriage tie was not dissolved with death. Even if the wife became faithless and ceased to love him, he was not at liberty to marry another. Harun who had recently married a girl and was happy with her advised Kusta Ben Luka to marry and be happy in life. According to the Caliph's principles a man should marry a new wife every year and by leading an active outdoor life and indulging in worldly pleasures should defy old age. Kusta Ben Luka's first excuse that he was aging and so could not marry was lightly dismissed by Harun. But the real difficulty was that Kusta believed in a monogamous marriage and once he was married he could not dissolve the bond. Harun on the other hand liked free love. His marriages were brought about by momentary whims. They both, but forth their points of view. Harun

points to nature which allows free love and Kusta Ben Luka's philosophy is opposed to it. But Harun assured Kusta Ben Luka that he had a girl in view who would make an admirable wife, was ever young and equally interested in mystic studies. This would make a fine match and Kusta Ben Luka agreed to marry her. Such a union would be strengthened by common interest and allow the individualities of both to develop fully without being merged into that of another. To this girl was the gift of Harun to Kusta Ben Luka and the latter was perfectly happy in his marriage. The girl also loved him because she liked him immensely and also for his studies. Immediately she came to his house as a bride she showed the keenest interest in those studies though she herself could not read the books. With wonder and amazement, but without understanding she would handle those books and gaze at them. She had no interest in the garden or her house. She 'contemplated' him and made him and his books the object of her absorbed attention and in this way unconsciously she acquired an intuitive insight into the mysteries which were his study. In this strange way she learnt many things which even her husband did not know. But she herself was not at all aware of her knowledge.

On one night a strange thing took place. She got up in her bed and began to discourse upon mystic subjects to her husband like a teacher. He thought in his amazement that such words of wisdom could not be uttered by her and so some spirit was possessing her. The truths that she uttered were noble and sublime and clearly enough she was under some inspiration when she taught them to her husband. Those truths were so patent that they could successfully banish all superstitious ideas from Arabia.

After her discourse was finished she slept and woke up next morning busied herself with household forgetting all that had happened on the previous night. This somnambulism continued from time to time and so the strange method of teaching and her forgetfulness of it. On one night she went out of the house in an unconscious state, her husband pursuing her. When she reached the jungle she wrote down on the sand signs and symbols with her finger which her husband had been marvelling at while studying. Thus he continued to learn things which, unaided in this mysterious way, he perhaps could not comprehend.

But an anxiety began to trouble him. He was afraid that this process of acquiring may suddenly come to an end. If she any day could recollect her talks given in an unconscious state, or she began to feel that his love for her was simply due to the fact that he had discovered her to be an instrument of knowledge, or she doubting his love withheld her own from him, what should happen to him? For him the acquisition of knowledge was essential as milk to a child. If she ceased to love him or failed to impart knowledge he would fall in a pitiable condition. That was his fear. Then in an outburst of praise he felt that she was an embodiment of all knowledge. To Harun she seemed 'youth's very fountain' and for Kusta Ben Luka she is knowledge personified.

Having disclosed his secret to be carefully preserved he closes the letter with his one great experience of life. The charms of beautiful woman and their blandishments dazzle men lead them astray. He is the only man in Arabia who listens to the words of wisdom without surrendering himself to the enchantments of beauty.

Remarks on the Poem.—This is one of the poems which Yeats wrote under the mystic inspiration of oriental tales. The poem is steeped in an atmosphere of mystery and romance. With a few touches in the beginning he has been able to create an oriental atmosphere which pangs on the poem like a haze on the earth. There are expressions also which catch the native spirit in the garb of a foreign language.

The first problem which the poet suggests is the true ideal of marriage or relation between man and woman. As a poet Yeats is not called upon to give any particular, but his suggestions provoke thought on this most important problem which, with the change of time, assumes different aspects. Harun represents the type of a pleasure-seeker. Philosophic or spiritual aspect of marriage does not appeal to him. He frankly says that pleasure is his aim. His best argument is the law of nature which permits free love without any mutual obligations after the momentary union. That the human soul is changeless and that it exists even after death, is an idea which never troubles and does not influence his career in life. Kusta Ben Luka represents an ideal. He believes that marriage is a union which even death cannot dissolve and so there can be only one true marriage. But supposing he found an ideal wife and complete freedom for both the parties to develop their individualities without subjecting it to the other's subjection what should happen? He did find an ideal wife with common interests, ever young and helpful beyond his dreams in the realization of his aim in life. But he was afraid that love may not be lost between them and her feelings might change towards him. He was wise at least in one respect that he was not a slave to the beauty of women and could always exercise his judgment.

Kusta Ben Luka's love of mysterious love, his longing for something unattainable, wistfulness and melancholy appeal to us, more especially because such ideas are so often woven by Yeats in the texture of his poetry. Knowledge and more knowledge is the eternal cry of the human soul and for one whose mind is inclined to philosophy the world can offer nothing better than opportunities for acquiring and augmenting it. Kusta Ben Luka wandered about with Bedouins for mysterious knowledge, with a singleness of purpose he devotes himself to its acquisition. That is passion, and that is to him what milk is to a child. It is only such devotion that helps to propagate knowledge. The learned are the heroes in their own way and the debt that the world owes to them can never be calculated.

Then another which the poem rightly emphasises is that hard study alone can never bring us true knowledge. There are mysterious ways of acquiring it but we cannot always employ them. The true knowledge comes by inspiration, by intuition and not merely by logic or reasoning. What books and their life long study cannot impart may be achieved in a moment and our doubts may disappear with a flash in a moment. But such 'heaven-sent' moments do not come to all. The knowledge of the transcendent can be acquired only in this manner and when it comes to us as 'self-born' and 'high-born' our doubts are completely dispelled.

Yeats often becomes difficult in his poems specially when he deals with philosophic or mystic subjects. This poem is not very easy but the general meaning is quite clear and it is seldom that we are left in doubt as to what the poet really means. Fine poetic expression and the quality of music are

not best represented here. But the poem on the whole may be taken as a characteristic piece of work revealing the poet's genius.

THE GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID.

Notes.

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Harun Al-Rashid—(763—809). Caliph of Bagdad, who figures in the tales of the Arabian Nights, together with Jaffer, his vizir and Mesrour his executioner. He was the most powerful and vigorous of Abbasia Caliphs, his rule extending from India to Africa. Even now he is regarded to be the type of a just and wise emperor.

Lines 1—4. **Roysterer**—rough rude blustering fellow; a bully. **Caliph**—the rulers who succeeded Muhammad. The first four were Abu Bekr, Omar, Othman and Ali. Here the caliph referred to is Harun Al-Rashid. The title of Caliph was subsequently assumed by the Ottoman Sultans.

Explanation. Kusta Ben Luka is writing a confidential letter to Abd Al-Rabban an old friend and fellow bully but now occupying an important post under the Caliph.

Lines 5—20. **Treasure House**—which is in charge of the writer's friend and is securely guarded.

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Night-coloured—black coloured. **But brilliant embroidery**—but ornamented with flowers and figures of gold and silver thread, just as the sky is studded with stars. The reference may be to the sign of the

star and crescent on the flag of the Turks. **And wait war's music**—the banners are waiting to be received and carried to fields of battle immediately a war is proclaimed. **Pass gallery**—even the inner portion is not safe place for that letter. **Byzantium**—the name, during ancient and mediæval times, of the city now called Constantinople. Mustafa Kemal Pasha has removed the capital of Turkey from this city to Angora and the name of Constantinople has also been changed to Stamboul. **Stain**—colour. **The great book of Sappho's song**—Sappho was a famous Greek poetess of Lesbos who flourished in the sixth century B. C. Only fragments of her love poetry are extant. At one time they were highly prized and carefully collected. **But no**—the writer thought, in the first instance, that the letter should be put in the collection of the songs of Sappho because that book is highly prized and the letter too would remain safe there. But then he changes his mind. **There**—near Sappho's songs. **Love-lorn**—distracted by love. **Indifferent upon it**—but there the letter may fall into the hands of a careless young lover who may be consulting Sappho's book when distracted by love. **Treatise of Parmenides**—Parmenides was a famous Greek philosopher of Elea in Lucania and was considered the most renowned of all the philosophers of that province. His work *On Nature* a didactic poem, demonstrates that there is an Absolute Being but we can have no absolute knowledge of his nature. **And hide it there**—let the confidential letter be placed secretly somewhere near this valuable philosophic work so that it may fall into proper hands. **For Caliphs perfect**—the treatise being highly valued and bound to receive the greatest care of the land of Caliphs. **As they song**—as they prize Sappho's songs.

Explanation. The writer of the letter is anxious that it may be preserved most carefully at a proper place of safety and then at the proper time it should fall in the hands of a proper person as great mystery will be recorded therein. So his request is that it should be taken in the treasury of the Caliph where highly embroidered black hammers, ready to be taken to the fields of battle immediately a war broke out, are kept; and from those to the inner portion of the treasury where valuable records are deposited. Precious books from Constantinople written in letters of gold on purple parchment and Sppho's songs, are kept there. In the first instance he thought of putting the letter with Sappho's songs, but soon changed his mind as there was a chance of its being lost in case a careless distracted young lover consulted that book. The best place he decides upon is near the famous book by Parmenides, as it is a proud possession of the Caliphs and is always kept with the greatest care in perfect condition.

Lines 21—57. When fitting time has passed—at the proper time when the mystery revealed in the letter can safely be disclosed. **Had found no chronicler**—would not have been recorded by any historian or record keeper. Would have been lost to the world. **The wild Bedouin**—they are supposed to be the descendants of Ismail and are Arabs who live in tents and are spread over the whole of Northern Africa and Western Asia. They are divided into independent tribes each governed by its own Sheikh. They live on their flocks and herd, rice etc., and are prone to robbery. They are like gypsies in Europe. **Approve those wanderers**—must praise the wild Bedouin for. **Occupied with war**—engaged in important state affairs and wars. **Feature-**

less as air under a wing—the desert offers no variety of sights and scenery. It is as monotonous as the paths of birds in the sky. **Can give bird's wit**—can make a wanderer flighty and incapable of sustained effort. **They**—the wanderers. **And speak out phantasy**—say many fanciful and mysterious things about me and my knowledge of them. **Recall the year**—Abd-Al-Rabban is asked to remind himself of the time when. **Jaffer**—the close friend and constant companion of Harun. As vizir, or chief minister of Harun, he governed with great ability and success the empire of the Abbasids and yet was slain, along with all his house save one, by Harun in an inexplicable fit of hatred. **If but the in the fire**—this is the remark made by Harun after slaying Jaffar. If he would suspect any body to know the real cause why Jaffar was slain he too would be put to immediate death.

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That speech knew—Bagdad was never enlightened as to the real cause of murder. **But again**—but after slaying Jaffar, Harun seemed to have regained his youthful vigour and buoyancy of spirit. It was surprising. **Seemed so on purpose**—this was the secret remark of Jaffer's friends. Harun pretended to be a vigorous young man as a subterfuge. **That none conscience struck**—his youthful buoyancy after murdering his friend was assumed to allay the prick of his conscience at the foul deed. **But that's thought**—Kusta Ben Luka remarks that such an idea was prompted by disloyalty to Harun. It was not true. His youthfulness was due to another reason. **Enough for me**—for my purpose it is quite enough to say. **The year**—in which Jaffar was slain.

The mightiest.....**the world**—Harun the Caliph. **The least considered**.....**courtiers**—an oriental way of referring to himself—the writer of the letter. **Sat down**.....**pool**—he put aside for the time his royal dignity and behaved in an informal manner. He carelessly sat down by the pool and played with the golden fish. **Colloquy**—conversation between two persons. **To show**.....**honey-comb**—in order that people may know how great men who become violent tempered and bitter because they lose the power to enjoy the pleasures of the world and are yet passionate can find the treasure house of all pleasures and live to enjoy them. **I have brought****house**—these are the words of the Caliph uttered in a confidential manner. **Slender**—delicate and young. **Change**.....**spring**—an ideal of voluptuous persons. **Sunk in happiness**—an oriental expression. **You tread these paths**—pointing to the garden where the two were sitting.

Explanation. Kusta Ben Luka desires the letter to be placed in the archives so that when a number of years have passed it may fall into the hands of a proper and learned person and he may learn a secret which cannot be found any where excepting perhaps among the wandering Bedouins. He is glad that he found opportunities of being welcomed by these nomads when he was neglected by the Caliph busy with important state affairs. But at the same time he must confess that wandering makes a man flighty and incapable of any serious and sustained work. When he is dead gone the Bedouins will speak many things about him and say incredible things. For the present, however, he desires his friend to recall the day when Jaffer was slain by Harun without any ostensible reason and the people were warned on pain of death never to pry into that

affair. One remarkable thing which happened immediately after Jaffer was slain was that Harun appeared much younger than before. It was wrong on the part of some of Jaffer's friends to say that Harun assumed a youthful appearance to silence his guilty conscience. The secret of his youth was, however, different from what disloyal persons supposed it to be. For his purpose it is quite enough to say that the mighty Caliph came to his humble self that very year in early summer and putting aside all formality sat down in his garden by the fountain and sported with the goldfish in it. The conversation which took place between the two is worth recording, because it shows how the passionate great persons can alter their pain in life into conviviality and joy. The Caliph told the writer that he had recently married a young stern girl according to the saying that every year one must have a new bride. That they were both very happy and were pained to find him deprived of such joys even in spring time. To which he replied that he was aging and it was no time for him to marry.

Lines 58—69. Do not seem old—may have grown in years but do not look our age as we maintain our youthfulness. **Live by habit**—subject to the general condition or tendency of the body. **Every day**
 **court a woman**—regularly indulge in youthful exercise and mode of living suited to young men. **Ride with falcon** **edge**—falconry was a very popular pastime. Birds of prey were trained to pursue and catch birds from the sky. **The ringed mail**—coat of mail made of iron rings. **Neither enemy** **things twice**—every time you go to a battle, practise falconry or court a woman you gain a new experience. These events never repeat themselves as to dull their interest into a monotony.

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Mimicry—imitation; act of mimicking. **And so a hunter of youth**—the person who goes out on hunting animals or birds, takes part in warfare or courts a woman behaves and appears like a young man and shows youthful spirit irrespective of his age. An active vigorous life and indulgence in the pleasures of the world keep off old age. **Poet's thought**—poetic fancy and imagination. **Can a poet's falls**—poetic fancies which rise in the mind of the poet and impart to him a desire for indulgence in world by pleasures. **Pure jet**—the clear water coming out of the fountain. **Now lost amid blue sky**—becomes invisible when the sky is its background. **Can poet's thought be mimicry**—if poetic fancies occur to our mind then we do not possess merely a semblance of youth but are actually young.

Explanation. The Caliph says that men like himself and the writer cannot truly be called old. Those who subject themselves to the general tendency of the body to grow infirm with age do become old. But those who live a vigorous youthful life full of vitality and adventure defy age, and though they may be growing in years they can yet remain young and continue to enjoy the pleasures of life. The Caliph himself daily goes not to the river bank for falconry and hunting birds, he takes some military exercise regularly with a heavy coat of mail on his person, and always courts new women. Experiences of life in these enjoyments are always fresh and free from monotony. They never repeat themselves and thus continue to impart a zest to life from day to day. When we indulge in them our eyes shine with youthful energy and we seem to be young again.

Not that we seem to be young because we indulge in hunting, coursing and warfare. We possess youth itself. Otherwise how could poetic fancies arise in our mind? Just as water coming out of a fountain rises up to fall again in the fountain giving life to lily leaf and fishes, so our poetic fancies which occur to our imagination impart, not merely a likeness to youth but actual freshness and vigour to our body. Thus the springs of poetry defy old age.

Lines 70—77. Our souls are.....body—we are more vigorous, passionate and youthful. Our hearts are not allowed to sink under the weight of old age and we live a more active life. **Than souls****rhyme**—than those persons who never hunt, indulge in no out-door and invigorating exercises and have no poetic imagination to sing of the glories of love. Their sentiments have become dull. **The soul's own youth****lineaments**—the lines and wrinkles on our faces may show the hand of old age but they also indicate that our hearts are young. **My candle is bright**—candle is compared to the soul or heart and lamp to the body. My heart is full of youthful vigour and desires of worldly pleasures. Old age has not dulled my desire for indulgence. **My lantern**—this body. **My lantern****reign**—but the signs of old age appearing on body do show that I was born during the reign of Harun's father. **And yet****our blood**—and still, though old in years, the spring time causes stirrings in our hearts. Spring can still produce the desire for enjoyment.

Explanation. The writer agrees with Harun's remark. When we are more passionate and vigorous than those who do not indulge in any pastimes and whose poetic imagination is dull, old age does not matter. If our bodies indicate old age our

faces show that our hearts love pleasure. Old age has not affected our desire for indulgence. The writer, no doubt, was born during the last reign yet his love of pleasure is as keen as that of a young man. And that is why, as Harun says, spring time stirs in them the desire for enjoyment.

Lines 78—88. Great prince.....speech—so far Harun and the writer agree. But the latter now politely points out the difference of opinion between them. **Love has seasons—**there are occasions and times when love rises in our heart. **If the spring bear off—**if the spring which stirs our blood takes away our love. **The heart.....defeat—**we should not feel for the loss. **Accepted.....faith—**it is not clear what particular faith is referred to. But it is a religion which enforces monogamy, as Christianity does. **Unnatural to.....minds—**the Arabs cannot appreciate monogamy as their religion permits and general practice allows polygamy. **When I.....ever—**I believe in monogamous marriage, the tie of which is indissoluble. **Her—**my wife's. **If her eye.....mine—**once they are married and if his wife does not respond to his love. **Or brighten.....eye—**or she begins to love another young man. **My heart.....ruin—**he may watch the love between him and his wife daily diminishing but he can love no other woman. **Nor find a remedy—**much less he could marry another woman.

Explanation. Agreeing that we are only old in body and not in spirit and still long for the pleasure of youth one thing I must be allowed to say with all respect to the great prince. You believe in making love whenever you feel that sentiment strong for any particular woman and are not sorry if that love does not last long. Just as blossoms appear in spring time and pass away with the season, so is

your love. It is not constant and you do not mind at all transferring to any woman for whom you may take a fancy for the moment. But my religious creed is different. I do not believe in free love, and the Byzantine faith which I profess to follow allows only monogamous marriage enjoining that it is indissoluble. I can marry only one woman once and for ever. Even if she ceased to love me or gave her affection to another young man I can neither renounce her nor marry another woman.

Lines 89—95. But what.....woman—but would you marry a woman whom I have found out by chance. **Who so shares.....mysteries**—who is as eagerly interested in knowing the ancient and perplexing love and keenly desires to learn the great mysteries.

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So strains.....life—exerts herself utmost to learn transcendental things. **An eye.....bright**—one who has never tried to comprehend these mysteries would appear to be a dull man. **And yet herself.....fountain**—in spite of her great efforts looks an embodiment of youthfulness. Not only she is young but inspires others also with her enthusiasm. **Being.....life**—being so full of vitality and energy.

Explanation. Harun can marry and renounce woman as often it pleases him but Kusta Ben Luka's principles of marriage are quite different. As he has not been able to find a suitable match and because he is interested in the study of mysterious knowledge he has remained unmarried so far. But now Harun says that he has by chance met a girl who would perfectly suit him. She is as keenly interested in learning the ancient mysteries as he himself is. There is thus a

common object of pursuit between them. She takes greatest pains to learn transcendental things and considers them dull who are not exerting themselves to acquire such knowledge. Then she seems to be ever young and full of vitality and energy. Such a woman is perfectly suited to him.

Lines 96—100. Were it but true—Kusta Ben Luka does not easily believe Harun. If it is a fact. **I would have give—**his life would become supremely happy and he would find its highest purpose fulfilled. **Companionship—**common interest and common pursuit. **That makes itself—**helps to develop his or her own individuality. **And not some other soul—**without merging one's personality into that of another.

Explanation. If you have really found out a woman as you have described then I shall realize my highest aim in life. Because such community of interest and pursuit of mysterious knowledge would enable us to develop our individualities to the fullest extent without merging the one personality into another. (Ordinarily marriage means subjection of the woman, or it used to be, to the will of the man. Her personality merged into that of her husband.)

Lines 101—109. That love must be—love should necessarily be. **In this life at peace—**should be constant and changeless in this life as well as hereafter. **It is right love—**if learned and wise persons praise such constant and changeless love it is quite proper and it does deserve their adoration. **But I being opposite—**but I am not a philosopher and so cannot praise constant love. I can on the other hand admire its opposite that is love which chances and springs up or dies

with the whim of the moment. **My passion**—my fickle sentiment of love. **Stronger**—it becomes more fickle and is encouraged in its inconstancy. **But to think**—only when I find. **Like passion**—momentary and fickle love. **The peacock.....doe**—nature also seems to favour temporary union between the sexes. **Mouth to mouth**—free love inspired by the moment and changing according to whim without the least ado or hesitation. **Is a man's mockery** by such an action man seems to mock at the idea. Indicates his disbelief in a changeless soul. **Changeless soul**—philosopher and religious teachers say that man's soul is subject to no change and it is everlasting.

Explanation. Harun says that he is not a philosopher though he knows that philosophers praise constant and changeless which continues unabated even in the life after death. It is right on their part to admire such love as they believe in an everlasting soul which never changes. When the two souls do not change then true love between them should also not change though bodies may perish. But cannot admire such constant love because, as he humorously remarks, he is not a philosopher. He indulges in free love which is born of the whim of the moment and soon vanishes. Even nature seems to encourage his instinct for temporary union as he finds animals also making free love. This tendency in a man and the fickleness of his love which he transfers so lightly from one person to another, seems to mock at the idea of a changeless soul or indicates his little belief in such a conception of it.

Lines 110—134. **His bounty gave**—Harun generously gave him. **Can shakechill**—more flowers in the cold months when they usually do not blossom. **Than all.....knew**—than he could

have in his youth. **What now can.....knew**—in his old age his enjoyment of life is much greater than he had it even in his youth. **A girl**—this is Harun's gift. He called her a 'woman' but she brims with life and so here she is called a girl. **Had heard.....past**—had come to know his adventurous life with Bedouins and his keen desire to learn mysteries. **Imagined.....side**—conjectured some phantastical events in his life. **Though time's.....care**—though he was so old that his withered features invited a woman's tender care rather than excite the love of a girl for him.

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Yet was.....of me—that attracted her. **Was it love.....sight**—or she did not love the man but for himself but for his dabbling in mysterious love and which had given a peculiar aspect to his eyes. **Stark mystery**—complete and entire, the union of which had dazzled his eyes. **Perplexed.....care**—puzzled and confused her imagination and deprived her of peace of mind. **Torchlight of that mystery**—the glow on his face which was the result of his successfully solving some mystery. **Pick out**—to mark with spots of colour. **Two contemplating passions**—passions which made Kusta Ben Luka the object of her love. The girl regarded him from two points of view: one with the eye of love for himself and the other her keen interest in his mysterious studies which also led her to love him. These are the two passions agitating the girl's heart, as Kusta Ben Luka imagines. **Chose one theme**—love the same person. **Through sheer bewilderment**—because overwhelmed by two passions making it difficult for her to exercise her judgment or discretion. **The garden paths**—she preferred something else in her new house to take a morning walk in the

garden. **Nor counted up the rooms**—she was not curious to see the house and its inner apartments to which she came as a mistress. **Before she text**—the mysterious studies interested her more than anything else. **Those days**—soon after she came as the mistress of the house. **Old dry writing**—deciphering of such writings is surely not what should interest a new bride. **On old dry faggots spring**—in full bloom, so these old dry books should not have interested a young girl. **Extravagance of spring**—the full bloom of youth. **Figured page**—page illustrated with pictures, charts or figures. **Were some dear cheek**—she caressed the illustrated page with her delicate fingers as if it was the face of her love.

Explanation. Then Harun bestowed upon him the great favour and that girl, whom he won through Harun, made him so happy in his old age that the joys of youth did not seem so gratifying. This girl had been observing his movements while he used to pass by her house. She had come to know his strange adventures in search of mysterious love and had imagined some fantastic things associated with his life. As a matter of fact he was so old and his face wrinkled that he deserved the tender care of a woman but not her. But strange to say that she fell in love with him. Kusta Ben Luka was not sure as to what particular thing in him attracted her. He did not know if she loved him for his sake (a strange thing for a young girl to love an old man) or she was attracted by her love of the mysterious which he had made the object of his devoted study. Perhaps her heart was captivated by two passions *viz.*, love for him and love for his studies. His face in his eyes wore a beaming aspect as the revelation of mystery to him had given a peculiar aspect to his countenance. The two pas-

sions, however, seemed to have bewitched her. Immediately she came to his house as a bride, strange to say, she did not care to see the garden or the apartments of the house. Her one interest was to know the contents of the mysterious books. She could not read them but her curiosity was very great and she would look at them with the closest attention and ask questions. For her a page was as good as the cheek of her lover and she would move her hand on it lovingly. The usual things which interest brides were of no consequence to her. Her sole absorption was the mystic love and the books which could throw light on it.

Lines 135—153. **Turn that I..... cheek—** she addressed him asking him to pay attention to her words as she was going to explain what he had tried to understand all these years and had laboured so much to that end that his body had become bent and his face turned pale. **Was itDjinn—**a spirit of immense power and generally of monstrous size. It is the same Persians word as 'jin.' **I say thatspoke—**surely it was not she, it must be some evil spirit who possessed her. **Live-long—**that lives or lasts long. **Truths without father came—**she gave an inspired talk. The truths that she uttered were neither the result of thought, nor of experience or learning. They were intuitive and spontaneous. **Truths that no book.....read—**they could not be found in any of the innumerable books that he had read.

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Nor thought out of her mind—they were not the fruits of speculation and reasoning. **Mine begot—**nor were they thought out by him. It was not the case of reading the sub-conscious mind of the other. **Self-born—**intuitive; independent of reason or acqui-

red knowledge. **High born**—sublime and noble. **Solitary truths**—every single truth uttered was independent of others and was not based on a chain of logical reasoning. **Implacable**—be compromising. **Straight line's**—clear cut ; admitting of no doubt or discussion. **Wandering**—rambling. **Vegetative**—producing growth in plants; pertaining to unconscious or involuntary bodily functions. **Those terrible dream**—those truths were like distinct and clear straight lines drawn across hazy, dreamy and indistinct ideas. **Even those truths Arabian host**—those truths were so potent that long after the death of Kusta Ben Luka they would successfully combat with innumerable false beliefs and superstitions prevailing in Arabia.

Explanation. Once on a dark night Kusta Ben Luka was engaged in his studies and close to him was sleeping his wife. Thinking that his light was disturbing her sleep he thought of screening it. But in the meanwhile she sat up in her bed and asked him to listen to her discourse and be enlightened about those mysterious subjects which he had been assiduously pursuing and which had bent his body and broken down his health. He thought that she was possessed at that moment by some evil spirit because it could not be her ownself who could discourse so well for more than an hour. She uttered truths which were intuitive and were neither based upon processes of thought and reasoning nor were learnt from any book. Those sublime truths each noble and unique, came to her by inspiration and were so uncompromising and beyond doubt that may be compared to distinct straight lines drawn across dreamy and vague ideas. They were so potent that even after his death they could combat the host of false ideas and superstitious belief so common in Arabia.

Lines 154—158. The voice—because he does not believe that she was speaking. **But awoke**.....
day—did not rise late for having kept awake at night.
Say about her work—merrily did she do her daily work, humming a tune, as was her wont. **In childish**
**passed**—completely oblivious of all that had happened at night and as innocent as a child.

Explanation. After she had delivered her discourse and communicated to him some of the deepest truths she slept and woke up next morning early at the usual time and did all her household singing merrily like any other day. She was perfectly innocent, like a child, of all that had happened at night.

Line 159—169. Of natural sleep—there was no somnambulism for so many nights. **Full moon**.....
height—on a full moon night and in the middle of it. **She rose**—somnambulism; sleep walking or talking in a state of sleep again appeared. **Unnoticed and unfelt**—she did not know at all what the husband did to her. **Hooded**—having a covering for the head. **Half running**..... **finger**—in a state of unconsciousness she left the house and quickly reached the desert where on the first ridge she sat down and with her white fingers made those mystic symbols on the sand which he used to study with care and wonder every day.

Explanation. For about twelve nights she enjoyed normal sleep. But one midnight when there was a full moon in the sky she rose from her bed in a state of somnambulism, walked away from the house while her eyes could see nothing and were shut. He covered her with a cloak but she did not seem to be conscious of it. Quickly she reached the desert and sitting on a ridge the marked some mystic symbols and signs on the sand with her white finger. Those

signs were the same which he used to wonder at and study with care at home. He led her home and she slept soundly. The next morning again she was busy with her round of duties without the least remembrance of all that had happened at night.

Lines 170—178. When may be moon—perhaps three times in a month. **Her month.....** **Djinn's**—she unconsciously uttered words of wisdom which were probably inspired by the great evil spirit. **She keeps that ignorance**—she is still unaware of all that she talked under the influence of that inspiration. **Nor has she.....books**—her feeling excessive awe and wonder with which she first saw his books is better controlled now. **It seems.....there**—her curiosity is now satisfied only by observing that I am working at my books.

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Old fellow student—Abd Al-Rabban. **Whose most.....youth**—who always proved to be a patient friend in listening to his problems when he was a youth. In whom he confided. **It seems I.....peace**—without sacrificing my peace I cannot acquire knowledge from her. I am passing anxious days for acquiring more knowledge from her, though she is my wife.

Explanation. For the first time she behaved like a somnambulist seven years ago, and even now for about three times in a month she utters words of wisdom, probably inspired by the Djinn. Even now she does not remember anything of all that happens when she is under the influence of inspiration. But it is not with the same feeling of wonder and curiosity that she looks at my books as she used to do when first she came as a bride. She watches me studying and that satisfies her curiosity. But he must confide

one thing to his old friend and confident of youth he has to sacrifice his peace of mind for getting mere knowledge from her. The cause of his anxiety is mentioned in the lines that follow.

Lines 179—195. **What it she ignorance—** supposing she were able to recall all that she uttered in inspired moments. **And so dream voice—** may begin to think that I love her simply because she imparts secret knowledge to me. **That every midnight voice—**my love and adoration, gifts and praises lavished upon her are due to the fact that she unfolds mysterious truths to me at midnight. I love her for what she imparts to me and not for her own sake. **That is to age to child—**that secret knowledge of mystic love is to me so important and essential as milk is to a child. **Were she to love mine—**if she withheld her love from me, thinking that I did not love her. **Lose its first simplicity—**if her love were not as spontaneous and artless as it has been so far. **Voice—**her power to communicate abstruse truths. **All my fine shiverings—**would be reduced to the position of an ordinary man without any distinction and left in an unevitable position. **The voice has drawn particular quality—**no doubt her inspired talks are full of wisdom but they have acquired a peculiar undefinable quality from her love for her husband. There is a touch of tenderness in them, though truth has often in it what may be called metallic hardness. **The signs and shapes**—symbols and mystic figures. **All those abstraction Parmenides—**many philosophical and subtle ideas which are generally supposed to have been derived from the work of Parmenides. **Parmenides—**see note on line 17. **Gyres—**circular motions. **Cubes—**solid square meant for calculations. **Midnight things—**instruments required for astronomical

observations. **Are but new expression her youth**—Kusta Ben Luka in an outburst of praise calls her the embodiment of all knowledge. Theoretical knowledge of abstract principles comes from her inspired utterances, and likewise when flushed with the ecstasy of youth, her body is the representation of all instruments which help in the advancement of knowledge.

Explanation. Kusta Ben Luka is afraid that he may not be deprived of his source of knowledge which he acquires from her inspired lips. Any day she may become conscious of her utterances at midnight, or she may think that his love for her is due merely to her usefulness as a repository of mysterious love, Kusta Ben Luka cannot possibly live without gaining knowledge from her. It is as essential for him as milk for a child. Then there is another thing which causes him anxiety. She may cease to love him thinking that he was withholding his love from her. Even if her oracular voice were to change or her guileless nature were altered the consequence for him would be disastrous. He would become then an ordinary mortal bereft of all his importance. Her sentiment of love has imparted a peculiar grace to her inspired talks which thus acquire a special distinction. They are not mere truths but truths conveyed with a tender feeling and thus acquire for him a sentimental value also. Then, in his outburst of praise he pays her the highest compliment for wisdom and learning. She is the embodiment of all knowledge. Even the theories propounded by Parmenides, the mysterious symbols and even the instruments which are aids to the advancement of knowledge proceed from her when she is in the ecstasy of youth.

Lines 196—202. And now my is out—

the heart of the mystrey is now exposed. **A woman's banner**—he compares the beauty of a woman to a banner which is fluttering violently in stormy wind. **Under it wisdom stands**—wisdom as an armed soldier is standing under that banner. **Nor dazzled by the embroidery**—ornamental needle work or artificial ornaments on the banner do not charm him. The beauty of woman heightened by blandishment does not affect him. **Nor lost . . . folds**—the metaphor of the banner is continued. He is not bewildered by a sense of mystery associated with the nature of a woman. **! alone can hear the armed man speak**—he alone can hear the voice of wisdom and thus is saved from the enchantments of beauty. The 'armed man' is wisdom already described as a soldier standing under the banner of beauty.

Explanation. He has completely imparted the secret he desired to disclose. His advice is that we should not lose our head when influenced by the beauty of a woman, but should allow the voice of wisdom to save us from falling a victim to it. The beauty of a woman is compared to a fluttering banner in stormy wind and its embroidery and dark folds to blandishments and mystery associated with woman-kind. Wisdom like a soldier, warns us only if we care to escape the influence of beauty. Kusta Ben Luka claims that he is the only man in the whole of Arabia who is proof against the onslaughts of beauty.

ALFRED NOYES.

12. FORTY SINGING SEAMEN.

For the Life and Work of Alfred Noyes see pp. 77 of the notes.

Substance of the Poem.--Forty Singing Seamen were going on their long voyage to Mogadore in a small ship. When they landed in the evening the prospect before them appeared to be threatening. The rising moon, the hills and dark sloping valleys seemed to put on a weird appearance and the sight reminded them of Polyphemus the one-eyed monster whose one eye had been put out by Ulysses. They even suspected a huge monster standing before them. The boulders and the pines, the hillocks and the moon all combined to present a frightful picture in the evening.

They, however, mustered up courage and proceeded forward to find a wonderful fountain throwing out bright jewels, near a crystal palace. Immediately they found themselves surrounded by ghosts and they discovered that it was a haunted place. They were given plenty of wine to drink. What a contrast from the dirty theme of London to which they belonged and the right royal reception in the magnificent palace of jewels accorded to them!

They were surprised by the sudden appearance of a darkling figure wearing a golden crown. They were cowed down with fear in his presence, but putting on bold faces told him that they were English seamen. This changed the attitude of that kinglike figure and he desired them to visit his palace to

which they readily assented. There again they saw marvellous things and learnt that the host was Prester John. The seamen, specially the skipper and the mate were wonder-struck to see the untold wealth and magnificence of Prester John's palace. The other seamen could not help laughing at their silly behaviour and gaping mouths at the marvellous sight. They had their dinner served by invisible fairies. They were then shown the garden and the phoenix bird which they had never seen before. But from the garden they were pointed in the distance a stream from which if they drank they could become eternally young. Thus tempted they started towards the forest where the stream was. But wild and strange animals there frightened them and they had to turn back. Somehow they managed to reach the shore and boarded their ship fearing all the time that they were being pursued by the monster whom they had imagined on landing. But soon the vision was gone and they could not account for it. They were simple seamen and it was impossible for them to explain how the vision had come. Perhaps the vision was caused by the grog which they had drunk in a dream.

Remarks on the Poem.—So long as these children or we retain our childish interest in the tales of fairies, ghosts and wonderland such poems will be written for our delight. Belief in the supernatural agencies may be gradually disappearing yet for the poetic imagination such tales will ever retain a charm independently of the common belief.

In the tale we find a strange adventure of forty singing seamen described. They reached a place which suggested weird beings and monsters. Perhaps this fired the imagination of the superstitious seamen. They saw visions of glory and realized for the moment that the ghostland was not a myth. But our

wildest dreams, even when realized, can charm us for a moment and we long for more. The foolish seamen would not stop to think that even if they could preserve their youth for ever they could not live in such plenty and luxury as Prester John enjoyed. What is the use of eternal life unless it is happy and contented. It is doubtful if man is really prepared to make the necessary sacrifice for the attainment of the highest. He shirks duty and is afraid of losing life.

It is not, however, necessary to draw any moral from this tale. We may feel delighted by the description of the palaces and half mad of precious jewels.

FORTY SINGING SEAMEN.

Notes.

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Stanza 1. **Forty**—the figure chosen by the poet does not seem to have any particular significance. The party was neither too big nor too small. **Seas of Wonderland**—the vague reference emphasises the sense of mystery. They were coming from the new world, either South or North America. **Mogadore**—a port and fortified town on the West coast of Morocco. **Plodded**—sailed slowly and laboriously. **Singing Seamen**—all of them were singers. **Barque**—a ship of small size; a barge or bark. It is usually square-sterned and has no head-rails. **We landed**—somewhere before reaching Mogadore. **Polyphemus**—son of Neptune and chief of the Cyclops. He lived in a cave near Mount Actna. Ulysses and his twelve companions entered the cave, and six of them were devoured by the monster. Then he fell asleep and

Ulysses put his one eye out and escaped. Polyphemus was the rival of Acis whom he crushed to death by a nock. The poet has used the expression 'a Polyphemus' making it clear that it was not Polyphemus but something or someone resembling him. **Nodded**—moved his head in quick motion, as if beckoning them. The motion of the ship nearing the coast made the land appear moving.

Battered—beaten with successive blows. **Moon-eye**—of which the eye is the moon. The moon suggests the one eye of the giant. **Working dark**—appeared to have different colours. **And we landed the dark**—when the sailors landed it was evening time. The moon was in the sky and it seemed to shed light of different hues in the darkness. The whole scene is compared with a Polyphemus as the moon suggests the idea of one eye and the land with its hilly outline seemed to be beckoning the party towards it. **Growing mellow**—becoming soft and mild. **Rich and ripe**—the word mellow is generally used for fruits. **As was true**—as a long had passed. **Ulysses**—son of Leartes and Anticlea whose Greek name was Odysseus. He was the husband of Penelope, father of Telemachus, and King of Ithica. He became one of the suitors of Helen, but despairing of success married Penelope. He was the wildest of the Greek leaders at the siege of Troy and was the inventor of the wooden horse. He distinguished himself in the Trojan war by his prudence and sagacity no less than by his valour. His wanderings on the way home from Troy form the subject of Homer's *Odyssey*. They lasted 20 years, but finally he returned home, and killed the suitors by whom Penelope had been surrounded during his absence, and whom she had constantly put off. His encounter with Polyphemus was one of the adventures he met on his return voy-

age to home. **Made him bellow in the dark**—made him cry horribly when his one eye was injured in the cave. **Chorus**—this line is sung by all seamen together. **Bunged**—thrashed severely. **Pine-torch**—the giant was sleeping in his cave when he was attacked by Ulysses and so the latter had taken with him a piece of pine wood which burns easily with a glow, for light. Poor people in hills still use pine wood for candle.

Explanation. Forty singing seamen crossing the seas of wonderland made a wearisome voyage to Mogadore. Their small ship was old. They landed at a place in the evening which appeared to them like the giant Polyphemus. The moon which shone in different colours suggested to them the one-eyed monster whose other eye had been long ago destroyed by Ulysses, when he attacked him in the dark cave lit only by a piece of burning pine wood. The rising moon on that island, its hills and general appearance suggested to the seamen the picture of the monster as if he was beckoning them to the shore.

Stanza 2 **Gloaming**—twilight; dusk. It may be noted that the word is a noun. **Were they . . . eyeball**—the range of mountains over which the moon was shining, was imagined by the seaman to be carried on his shoulders by the monster. **Ugly**—because they belonged to a monster; the mountain ranges were irregular. **The rolling eyeball**—in the moon. **Bleared and vinous glew**—the moon is compared to an eye which is suffering from soreness and has the colour of wine. **Boulder**—a mass of rock transported by natural agencies from its native bed. **Shaggy**—rough, rugged, covered with rough hair or wool or similar substance. **Brooding**—meditating moodily upon. **Sullen**—dark; dull; gloomily silent. **Were they pines shoulders**—the seamen are not yet sure if the

object before their eyes was the monster on whose bare shoulders huge hair was growing or they saw only boulders which were surrounded by pine trees.

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Simple Seamen—this a compliment which they are happy to appropriate for themselves.

Explanation. The seamen being simple persons could not judge from the distance whether what they saw on the land was a monster like a Polyphemus or they saw ordinary objects of wild nature in a frightful aspect in the light of the moon. The mountains they saw under the moon in the twilight appeared to them like the huge shoulders of the giant under his eye seemed to them swollen and inflamed. The pine trees growing over boulders at that time appeared purple coloured and above them was the moon. From the boulders looking down in the valley there was dismal darkness and gloomy silence which struck horror in the hearts of those who looked that way. In their simplicity and superstitious horror they wanted to know whether they saw pine tress growing above the boulders or the bare and hairy shoulders of a giant.

Stanza 3. Crossed poppies—now they were on the land and undaunted by the fear of a giant, they went over a field of poppy. **Poppy**—a plant having large glory flowers, from one species of which opium is obtained. **Like a spray of leaping fire**—from that fountain bright jewels were thrown out instead of water and so bright were they that the fountain seemed to emit fire. **Emerald glade**—a green open space in a wood. It was so green that it appeared to have been jewelled with emeralds. **Crystyl palace**—palace built of crystals instead of stone or brick. Its walls were transparent. **For a**

sailor to admire—even a sailor would not fail to admire it though he may have seen many lands and their interesting sights. **Leaves of bay**—the ‘bay’ is the laurel tree. The garlands of its leaves were placed on the heads of heroes as crowns of victory. **Crowned us**—honoured us as heroes by placing laurels on the heads. **Grog**—a mixture of spirits and cold water, without sugar. **They well-nigh drowned us**—they gave us plenty of wine to drink. **To the depth desire**—to the point of satiety. As much as they could drink or desire to take.

Explanation. In spite of their fear of a giant-like frightful shape they were bold enough to cross a plain of poppies, when they saw a fountain playing there. But instead of water it was throwing out jewels which leapt out of the mouth like a tongue of fire. Closely they also saw a glade which was made of precious emeralds. There was also a golden mountain at the base of which was a palace made of crystal. While they were admiring the palace a number of ghosts suddenly appeared. The ghosts treated them with respect and honoured them by placing laurel wreaths on their heads. They were also entertained with wine which they drank to their heart’s content. The seamen found the ghosts very friendly towards them.

Stanza 4. All about us—from all side music was heard. Perhaps they were drunk and so it seemed to them. **We were growing forgetful**—under the influence of liquor and enchanting music. **We were town**—they were poor seamen belonging to the slums of London and such a delightful time they never had before in life. **The nectar swallowed**—the drink which they enjoyed like nectar or for the drink of gods. **Seemed to vanish regretful**—the excellent wine which was served to them was perhaps a little ashamed find itself being

used by such persons. The wine should have reserved for a better class of guests. **As if we wasn't down**—because we did not deserve to be entertained with such a delicacy. **Vittals**—in seamen's language the correct word 'Victual', meaning provisions and food, becomes 'vittals'.

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A **sudden figure**—suddenly some one appeared before them. **Nigger**—a negro or black man. This term is often used contemptuously for a man belonging to a coloured race by white men. **Only bigger**—the man was as dark and tall as a nigger or devil. No he appeared even of greater proportions than the devil. **Drawing frown**—there was no welcome in his looks. His attitude was threatening.

Explanation. Then they were entertained with music which seemed to resound in the whole place. Gradually the charm of music and also the influence of wine was making them forget themselves and their surroundings. They being ordinary seamen coming from the slums of London had never tasted such wine or heard such music. The delicacies which they consumed seemed to be ashamed on being served to such persons. Soon they were alarmed by the sudden appearance of a menacing figure, tall and dark like a negro, but bigger than the devil himself. The figure wore a golden crown and gradually came near the seamen with a frowning look.

Stanza 5. Growls—grumbles. With dignity we chanted—we were enchanted by the grandeur of his mein. 'Chanted' for 'enchanted' is another mistake which the seamen make. **We won't be put on upon**—we will not be imposed upon. **What ? Englishmen ?**—the crowned person recognized them as Englishmen by their bold and fearless reply because they

said that they would not be imposed upon. **Being haunted**—to fall under the influence of ghosts and spirits. **Faith**—indeed. **Preston John**—a Christian ruler or priest of the middle ages, supposed to have lived in Africa or somewhere in Asia. 'Prester' is another form of the word 'priest'. **I don't malice**—he assures them of his good faith when asking them to enter his palace.

Explanation. That formidable human figure advanced towards them. As they came to know he was the famous Prester John. He growled to see the company there. His presence overawed the seamen but they put on bold faces and said that they were forty singing seamen who would not be imposed upon. From their language he immediately understood that they were Englishmen and his attitude towards them was at once changed. Then enquired if they would mind the company of ghosts and see his palace. Assuring them that there was no danger he asked them to see his palace where they would be welcomed. The seamen, thus assured, walked into his halls and palace.

Stanza 6. **Was one great diamond**—the door was built from one big piece of diamond. We are in a fairy-land except for Prester John's presence. **Hall a hollow ruby**—the entire hall was made of one single ruby from which it had been cut out. **Beachy Head**—the loftiest head-land on the Sussex coast, south of England. **My lads**—this is the usual form of address for seamen. **Nay bigger by a half**—no the hall was bigger by one and half times than Beachy Head. **Sees**—the colloquial form of speech among the uneducated persons. They often speak incorrect grammar. **Mate**—companion in the navy the term is now confined to petty-officers. **Wi' mouth agape**—wide open mouth on account of wonder. **A-staring**

like a booby—staring with wide open eyes like a silly or stupid fellow.

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Skipper—the master of a merchant-ship. **With his tongue**.....**calf**—on account of utter amazement his mouth wide open and the tongue hanging out as in case of a calf. **Politely**—showing good manners. Without showing excessive admiration or wonder. **Just as if you****notice**—without being overwhelmed by the strangeness of sight or the strange behaviour of the over-awed companions. **They**—the mate and the skipper. **The crew**.....**laugh**—other seamen of the party could not suppress their laughter.

Explanation. When the seamen were taken round the palace and in its halls they saw things which simply bewildered them with amazement. The door was made out of a single diamond and the hall was cut out of a single ruby. The hall was one and a half times bigger than Beachy Head ! The mate and the skipper could not suppress their feeling of wonder and they looked at things with mouth widely open, staring eyes and tongue coming out of the mouth. But that was not proper on their part. Good manners required that they should have suppressed their bewildered feeling of amazement. They behaved like stupid and provoked the irrepressible laughter of their companions. The two important persons of the party could not behave like silly persons but the other seamen by their loud laugh did not behave better.

Stanza 7. **My lads**—to whom the whole story is being narrated. **As I'm a sinner**—as truly as I am a sinner. There is no doubt about what they saw

next, as there is no doubt that he was a sinner. **Opal**—another precious gem. **Sunset** **cloud**—an opal shows many colours like a cloud taking its varied hues from the twilight. **Quick** **dinner**—in a twinkling of the eye the dinner was found served there. **Fingers of** **crowd**—they could not see the fairies who served the dinner. **Swaying gently**—inclining to one side in his chair. **Murmurs faintly**—a nice dinner and delicious drinks soften his tone. **I looks** **you**—I am addressing you. **You have** **proud**—we feel proud and elated by the honour you have done us. **Drank his health**—we drank wine wishing him health and good luck **Done**—made.

Explanation. The seaman who is describing this strange experience to another seaman at home assures him that as truly as he was a sinner so were the things they saw. While going through the palace the party and was led to another apartment which was shone with many colours as it was made of one opal. The beautiful colours seen on the horizon at twilight were all there. Prester John told them that it was dining-room. Instantly dinner appeared before them served by unseen fairies. After they had finished eating the skipper in a pleasant mood addressed himself to Prester John and they all drank his health and good luck because he had entertained them right royally.

Stanza 8. **Walls us**—takes us for a walk. **A feathered demon**—another strange sight. **Important**—magnificent and perhaps conscious of its own beauty. **Spicy tree**—a tree which produces some kind of pungent and aromatic substance used as condiment.

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That's the Phoenix—phoenix, a fabulous bird of golden and red plumage. It is said to have existed for 500 years all alone in the wilderness, and after burning itself on a funeral pile, to have risen from its own ashes. Hence it is an emblem of immortality. **Eddicated**—educated. **Hundred years**—some say it lived for one hundred years. **Hissself**—himself.

Explanation. Prester John then took the party to his garden where on a tree of spice they were shown a beautiful bird which appeared like a feathered demon. It was phoenix. As he told them every educated sailor knows that only one bird of that kind exists in the world and when it has lived its life of hundred years it burns itself to ashes, from which another beautiful bird rises. Its wings are of green and red colours and it is most beautiful to see.

Stanza 9. **Silve river**—its water being sparkling and clear. **His youth**..... **die**—he becomes eternally young. **The centuries**..... **ever**—because Prester John has drunk that water so hundreds of years pass away and yet he is as young as ever. **With his**..... **sky**—and so his music and magic also endure. **Your**—of ordinary mortals who have not drunk that water. **Growing colder**—advancing age dulls our enthusiasm for worldly pleasures. **While your**..... **older**—every thing shows that time has its effect upon it. **There's**..... **sky**—only if the seamen could go to the horizon where the sky meets the sea. **It shall call**..... **seamen**—it will lure the seamen to go there and learn the magic. **Till the fount**..... **dry**—to the end of their lives. **The found of song**—the seamen who sing. **Is dry**—the seamen are dead.

Explanation. Then Prester John told them that there was river of sparkling water in the forest there. If any body drank the water he would remain eternally young. He himself has drunk the water and for this reason he retains his youth, hears the mountain music and carries on his practice of magic, while years roll by leaving him untouched by time. The men of the world grow old and they lose their taste for life. There was magic near the horizon. The seamen said that they would like to go there singing and would either learn that magic or die singing in their attempt.

Stanza 10. So we it—the seamen determined to go there and learn that magic. **The forest** **defied us**—but the dense forest made it impossible for them to find a way through it, and its beasts were another danger. **Crimson**—we have never heard of a leopard of this colour. But in that world everything was strange. **Laughs at us**—ready to welcome them to his abode and make a meal of them.

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Sea-green—another colour which we have never heard a lion having. **Sniffed**—drew in breath sharply. **Chops**—jaws or mouth. **Unicorn**—a fabulous animal mentioned by ancient Greek and Roman authors as a native of India, with a body like that of a horse and one straight horn on the forehead. **We was** **thinner**—so that we could conceal ourselves more easily and become less tempting to the wild animals. **Because our dinner**—they, on the other hand, looked bigger because they had taken a full meal. **Cat o' high degree**—tiger or lion belonging to the feline species. **Made us very tempting**—they were so corpulent that animals could resist with difficulty the

desire to kill and eat them. **Menarjeree**—another word wrongly spelt and pronounced by the uneducated seamen. 'Menajerie' is the place for keeping wild animals for exhibition. The forest should not have been called a Menajerie because there the beasts live in natural state and not kept for show.

Explanation. The seamen then started boldly in search of the stream which could give eternal youth to those who drank from it. But they were thwarted by wild beasts and the dense forest. They saw first a crimson leopard which seemed to laugh at them. They were terrified by this sight. Then there came in view a green coloured lion which looked at them and sniffed and licked his jaws, as if it was hungry and wanted to eat them. Yet another animal appeared and terrified them. It was a unicorn red and yellow in colour with one horn on its head. It was going round and round a tree. They sulked with fear but it was difficult for them to look smaller after their full meal. They were very tempting to any beast of prey of the feline breed, nay for all the beasts in the forest. And they were afraid of being fitted and devoured.

Stanza 11. **Scuttled**—ran away with haste. **The poppy meadows**—which they first came upon after landing. **Where the awful.....dark**—where again they found the giant-like appearance of the hills. See Stanza 2. **Pushes out from shore**—took the small boats and hurriedly left the shore. **A-jumping at our shadows**—so much terrified that they were afraid of their own shadows thinking that they were being pursued by some one. **Pulls away**
.....bargue—were glad to go rapidly to their old small ship. **And home again.....dark**—these words are almost a repetition from the stanza 1. The same scene recurs again.

Explanation. The terrified seamen at once ran away from the frightful forest turned back to the sea-shore by the same path that they had taken after landing. They crossed the plain of poppies and reached the place from where the moon, to hills with their boulders and pine trees looked threatening in darkness like a giant. They hurried to the boats and rowed swiftly to reach the ship. They even so terrified that even their own shadows deemed like some frightful objects pursuing them. They were happy to be on board the ship and once again sail slowly homeward.

Stanza 12. Across the seas blundered—we reached somehow their native city. **Blundered**—more than once losing their way during the voyage. **Puzzled for to know**—perplexed to find out how far the vision was caused by.

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Pondered—thought over recalling all that they had seen. **Tipple**—strong liquor taken in small quantities. **Forty thousand years ago**—the seamen seem to have a fascination for 'forty' their own number. The period when the fairy tales were true and actually happened. **Could grog**
 **followed**—was it possible that the grog which they had drunk in a dream had produced its effect upon their brains and created for them a world of unreality. It is a double extraction. To drink in a dream and by its effects to see a vision of another unreal world.

Explanation. When returning home during the voyage they were perplexed by the vision they had seen. Was it due to some supernatural agency, some ghost or monster? Or it was caused by drink-

ing grog in a dream which created another dreamland for them during its intoxication. If the first supposition was unbelievable, the second was more absurd. But they were all foolish seamen and so could not know how the vision was caused.

THOMAS HARDY.

13. THE PAPHIAN BALL.

Life and Work.—Thomas Hardy, English novelist and poet was born in Dorsetshire on June 2, 1840. He belonged to the family which was one of the branches of the Dorset Hardys. It was from his mother that he received his earliest education before he was sent to the village primary school. Later he was educated as an architect and in 1862 he became an assistant to Sir Arthur Blomfield R. A. in London. From the age of twenty-two to twenty-seven he practised architecture as a profession but his real work was poetry which he began writing from 1859. In 1865 he published his first short story in Chambers' Journal. During the next two or three years he wrote a good deal of verse but he hesitated between architecture and literature. But finally the choice was soon made and the edifice of humanity interested him more than constructions of wood and stone.

Hardy soon became known as promising novelist in 1871 with the publication of his story *Desperate Remedies*. In 1874 his *Far from the Madding Crowd* was published which at once made him a name. Following that at short intervals, came a long series of powerful novels from his pen. Perhaps to the most notable of his stories are *The Trumpet Major* (1880); *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891); and *Jude the Obscure* (1895).

His life is divided into three periods, the first produced the novels. In the second the most important work a dramatic poem entitled *The Dynasts* was produced. It was published in 1908. The

Nepoleonic wars had always interested his imagination, and finally became the theme of his crowning achievement *The Dynasts*, which is regarded by good critics as one of the greatest works in literature. The central figure of this poem is Napoleon.

The third period is wholly devoted to poetry. All the time, however, the lyrical mood was visiting him and he published *Wessex Poems* at the age of forty-eight in 1898. But this period almost exclusively devoted to poetry begins with *Time's Laughing Stock* published in 1909. Other books of poetry followed the more notable of them are *Satires of Circumstance* (1914), *Moments of Vision* (1917); *Late Lyrics and Earlier* (1922); and *Human Shows, Far Phantasies* (1925). In 1928 appeared the last volume published posthumously, entitled *Winter Words*.

Thomas Hardy, O. M., died on January 12, 1928. His ashes were buried in Westminster Abbey. He is known as the last of the great Victorians.

Characteristics as a Poet.—Thomas Hardy was considered to be a great novelist whose *Wessex Novels* have already become classics, but his recognition as a poet came later. The reason is that he began to write poems when he was considerably aged. It is significant, to note that Lionel Johnson in his admirable book *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, (1894) makes no mention of Hardy as a poet. When Hardy took seriously to verse able critics regretted that the master of prose-fiction erred and strayed into a wrong practice. The disparagement had no effect on the poet. *Time's Laughing Stocks* in 1909 and between these two came *The Dynasts* (1904—1906). The last poem and the other later pieces have won for Hardy with all limitations of expression a distinctive place in English poetry.

It is rather curious that Hardy should take to poetry when others abandon it, but the fact is a solid proof of the writer's youthfulness and modernity. There is a consistent development of thought all throughout his novels and poems. He is fatalist. There is the Immanent Will riding rough-shod, though playfully, over the happiness of man. The attempt of pretty humanity to grapple with the powers above is like the hopeless attempt of tiny insect to scale the height of a dark mountain of polished glass. The Immanent will expresses itself through nature and sex and the events fall so well that they seem to be pre-arranged. Poised on the surface of a stormy sea of troubles the victims are swept struggling and helpless to their sad doom. The most pessimistic expression of this philosophy of life is in Hardy's four great tragedies—*The Return of the Native*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess D'Urberville* and *Jude the Obscure*, in the last of which we feel horror rather than pity.

Hardy's peculiar conception comes out of his conviction. He is quite sincere. He is over sensitive to the tribulations of life and cannot avert his gaze wilfully from its terrible issues. People accuse him for want of optimism, but if a blind man cannot see, it is not the fault of the blind man. The birds whose feathers have been plucked cannot fly and must of necessity go hopping on the ground. He is reasonable if his view is verified by facts of existence. Those are chance utterances of the writer which speak of the joys of love or hope of a better order of the universe, but these flickering gleams are so evanescent that they never illumine the sombre gloom that envelops his writings. This seems to be the final evolution of the deterministic creed of an old age which tired of the bitterness of the world,

hopeless of the betterment of the human lot, at last reconciles itself with the inevitable, half doubting the ultimate bliss of the world. Thus he closes on a mellowed tone of resignation and quiet longing.

The Dynasts of Thomas Hardy is the most remarkable exposition of this creed. In the words of L. Abercrombie *The Dynasts* is the "biggest, the most consistent and deliberate exhibition of fatalism in literature. With the back-ground of the Napoleonic War the poet symbolizes the greatness of Fate and the bitterness of man with the ultimate note of pale optimism—

*Consciousness the will informing, till
It fashion all things fair."*

The shorter poems of Hardy are no less significant. We find here the same variety and range of content and the bigness of the world where his thought and imagination move. The poems give the same conscious awe of life's wonder and tragedy which the novels and the great poetic drama carry. We get the haunting echo of the cry that in the fields and laves of Wessex, the drama of individual existence is as intense and inscrutable as in the larger whole which it reflects. He has written sonnets, dramatic monologues, psychological studies, epigrams, songs and ballads, and only half a dozen do not give implications behind the scenes. Hardy's poetic expression is the expression of a strong personality who has long pondered over the ways of life and Nature. Almost all his poems carry the sense of injustice, pity, irony of circumstance, and feelings of scathing melancholy, which serves as antidotes to envy and pride.

Hardy's sonnets treat of disillusion in love and mesalliance. His lovers are always conscious of

'life's little ironies'. In *A Looking Glass, The King's Experiment, The Conformers*—in all these Time broods over the life of man. Hardy does not doubt the sincerity of optimists but he himself cannot find out the reasons for optimism. He sincerely confesses at a Cathedral service:

*"That from this bright believing hand
An outcast I should be,
That faith by which my comrades stand
Seem phantasies to me,
And mirage-mists there shining land
As a drear destiny."*

Hardy cannot ignore the travails of life and exult fatuously like a thoughtless optimist. His expression in 'Timing Her' or 'Great Things' sounds notes of joy, but it is tremulous and soon breaks away before the strong current of sadness and pathos in poems like 'The Going' and 'Lament.' His 'Afterwards' already shows the doubt of a better scheme when the poet himself is no more. Nothing else can surpass the elegiac sweetness of this piece.

Substance of the Poem.—A band of musicians was going to a place to take part in the usual Christmas festivities. It was evening time and the musicians had to go by a path in the neighbourhood of Egdon Heath. Suddenly they found a strange figure meeting them while humming weird tune. He invited them to a ball instead of going to sing Christmas carols which they had been doing year after year, and promised them heaps of gold. They discussed the matter among themselves whether they should go to a secular dance party or as usual sing hymns in praise of God and the nativity of Christ. The lure of gold prevailed and religious duty was held in abeyance. The strange figure led them blind-folded by unknown paths and when their eyes were opened

they found themselves in a magnificent hall where beautiful young men and women were ready to dance. The whole atmosphere of the place was voluptuous. The musicians played upon their instruments and couples danced practically for the whole night, and heaps of gold were placed before the former. But when they began to doze immediately the hall and the dancers disappeared and they found themselves exactly on the spot where the stranger had met them to invite them to a ball. The musicians lost their gold and missed performing at religious ceremonies. Disappointed they went to the church next morning and were astonished to find people admiring their Christmas which they had given last night. How could it happen? They had been beguiled by the stranger and they were absent from Christmas festivities at night and were present at the ball elsewhere. Immediately they realized that they had been beguiled by the devil and he had contrived to impersonate them in the Christmas festivities of the night. They had surrendered to the lure of gold and had placed themselves under the influence of the devil neglecting a more pious duty. The poet says that he heard the story from one of the musicians against whom the trick had been played.

Remarks on the Poem.—In *Forty Singing Seamen* by Alfred Noyes we were told the strange experiences of the sailors who reached a strange place, a veritable land of fairies, and did not know whether all that they had seen was a vision or a dream. This story is also similar. The Mellstock Quire meets with a similar experience, though the musicians themselves by their own weakness help the ruin of their souls. Whenever there is a conflict in us in choosing between the path of rectitude and religion and that of pleasure we, as poor mortals, oftener succumb to the

lure of pleasure. Our religious zeal and duty towards God are important factors in life, but only so long as no temptations cross our path. Unless we have been tried we cannot depend upon our spiritual strength to resist the pleasant evil and tread the thorny path of religion.

These are not the most tempting things in life as easily lost as the heaps of gold by the musicians. Are we not running after shadows and waste the best opportunities of life in the greedy acquisition of things which turn into dust no sooner we touch them?

But after all how can we blame man, a poor tiny creature, a vessel of weakness when the mighty devil with all his nefarious resources is pitched against him? The surprise would be if man did not fall. God must have mercy upon man because he is created so weak, there are so many holes in his armour and he never can be a match to the devil.

THE PAPHIAN BALL.

Notes.

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Paphian—from Paphos a city of Cyprus sacred to Aphrodite. Hence Paphian, a courtesan. Aphrodite or Tenus the Greek goddess of love was the daughter of Jupiter and Dione, but according to later legend born of the foam of the sea. She received the prize of beauty in the judgment of Paris. Cupid was her son. **Mellstock Quire**—the band of musicians belonged to Mellstock, some place in Hardy's country Wessex which he made famous by his novels. 'Quire' old form of choir, a chorus or band of singers, especially those belonging to a church.

Lines 1—4. Christian rounds—dances which usually take place in connection with Christmas festivities. **Quire**—see note above. The same as choir. **Viols**—stringed instruments of the type of the violin. **Theretofores**—before that time; as it happened in the previous years. **Rushy-Pond**—some pond in the neighbourhood of Egdon Heath. It was overgrown with rush. **Egdon Heath**—the scene of Hardy's 'Return of the Native'. The description of the heath by the novelist is one of the finest found in English literature.

Explanation. A party of musicians was going to take part in Christmas festivities and dances with their musical instruments as it had done in previous years also. They had to pass by Rushy-Pond not far from which Egdon-Heath lay covering a big area.

Lines 5—10. There stood figure—there the musicians saw some person standing. **Against the moon**—with the moon behind him. The light of the moon was falling on his back and not his face. **Spare**—not stout looking. **Humming tune**—singing to himself an uncanny tune. The musicians could not understand the tune. It was not only strange but seemed unearthly. **Weirdsome**—unearthly; uncanny; relating to witchcraft. **Tire of**—are tired of. **Christian carols**—songs of joy and praise sung in connection with Christmas festivities. **Lute**—play upon a lute or a musical instrument like the guitar.

Explanation. While they were near the pond and Egdon-Heath on their way they were suddenly confronted by a strange tall and thin man who was standing with his back to the moon and so his face could not be clearly seen. He was humming a tune which the musicians could not understand, only they knew that it was unearthly. He told the musicians that they were surely tired of singing the same songs

repeatedly during Christmas festivities, and so suggested that they should play upon the lute in a ball and promised them many guineas if they agreed.

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Lines 11—14. *Slight*—insignificant; unimportant. **Condition hangs on't**—but there is one condition that has to be accepted. **But you . . . thereto**—and you will willingly agree to it. **Anon**—immediately. **May not . . . on**—so that you may not talk about the place.

Explanation. There was just one condition attached to it and he was sure that the musicians would readily assent to abide by it. It was that they had to go to that place, where the ball was going on, blindfolded; so that just then they did to not talk about the place and it was kept secret from them.

Lines 15—22. **They stood other**—they did not proceed further and began to discuss among themselves whether to accept the stranger's offer and condition or not. **From one to another**—wonder from door to door. **Ancient hymns**—repeated since ancient times praising God and celebrating the birth of Christ. The same old religious songs grown monotonous. **In the freezing night**—and suffer from the inclement cold weather at night. **All for nought**—for little gain. **'Tis serving God**—the music and songs being dedicated to God are a religious duty. **Shunning evil**—this duty keeps them free from sin and is pious. **Might not devil**—if they were to do anything else on that night or were to go to a ball and foresake religious songs that may be a sinful deed. Thus they would be serving the devil and not God. **Lured by his call**—tempted by the stranger's offer. **All**—without any exception; all the musicians.

Explanation. The musicians discussed among themselves the offer of the stranger, without proceed-

ing further on their way. One of them argued that as it was no use going from door to door on cold winter night singing the old time-worn tunes and get nothing instead. To him this business seemed quite foolish and he was for accepting the offer. But another, a more religious-minded musician objected and said that their Christian songs were offered to God and it was a religious duty on their part to sing them on the occasion. If instead of religious songs they were to secular ones and go to a ball they would, leaving the path of religion, fall a victim to the devil's temptation. But then another rejoined that they would be getting a handsome remuneration. And this settled the point, as they all agreed, temptation triumphing over pious duty, and did not object to go with blindfolded eyes.

Lines 23—26. Some new track—the way was not familiar to them. **Doubting to back**—they were afraid that returning they might fail to find the way out.

Explanation. The stranger blindfolded them and took them by a path which they did not know before. They were afraid that returning they might fail to find the way. When they reached the destination and their eyes were opened they found themselves in a strange hall.

Lines 27—30. **Gilded alcoves**—golden recesses. **Chandeliers**—ornamental frameworks for holding lights. **Voluptuous paintings**—paintings depicting love scenes and partially made figures. **Piers**—rows placed one above another. **Rare**—like which they had not seen before.

Explanation. The hall to which they were admitted was luxuriously furnished. They had never seen anything like that before. There were golden

recesses, big chandeliers and painting arranged in rows showing love scenes. The mansion was very grand. They found the dancers waiting for the commencement of the ball.

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Lines 31—36. **They**—the musicians. **Tuned and played**—adjusted the tunes of their instruments and played upon them. **Half-naked women tripped**—women in nude condition were dancing voluptuously. **Tripped**—moved with short light steps. **Advanced**—came forward. **Footing fast**—with a rapid motion. **Swore strange paths**—their talk was blasphemous and indecent. **The slow hours wore them**—they felt tired after playing upon their instruments so long. **While shone them**—but all the same guineas which they received were shining before them.

Explanation. When the musicians had tuned their instruments the dance began. They played music and partners danced. Half-clad women came forward with light steps and then danced in a whirl with handsome young men. This went on for a long time till the musicians began to feel tired but they were richly rewarded with shining heaps of gold.

Lines 37—44. **Drowsy at length**—the musicians began to feel sleepy after long playing. **In lieu of the dance**—instead of playing upon their instruments to the accompaniment of the dance. **While watched**—a particular song, the tune of which the musicians were to play while couples were dancing. **They bowed by chance**—the musicians nodded because they were feeling sleepy. **At a blink**—in a twinkle or wink. **Flashed a change**—suddenly a change came upon them. **The well-known heat**—Egdon-Heath. **They view**—they now see before their eyes. **The spot overnight**—the exact place where they

had met the stranger on the previous night. **Wheedled**—enticed by soft words. **The stranger's sleight**—the trick played upon them by the strange tall figure.

Explanation. The musicians after a long engagement were tired and felt very sleepy. When they were to play the game 'while shepherds watched' they instead of playing to the dancers accompaniment, nodded, feeling sleepy. In an instant, as if in the twinkling of the eye, the ball room disappeared and so did the dancers from their view. They found themselves suddenly exactly at the spot on the heath where the stranger had met them on the previous night and had enticed them away by successfully playing a trick upon them.

Lines 45—48. **There, east, red**—when they found themselves suddenly transported to that very spot they found that the night was over and the morning light of the Christmas day was shining. This passage of time convinced them that the vision may have vanished but it was not wholly unreal. **Rainbarrow**—a local mound near Egdon-Heath, raised over graves in former times. **Bulged**—swelled; appeared with a round protuberance. **Supine**—lying on the back; inclined. **Clyffe-Clump**—another local name. It seems to be a hill. **Clump**—a thick short shapeless peace of anything; a cluster of trees or shrubs. **Faint far-off crest**—the top of the hill which was faintly visible from the distance.

Explanation. When the musicians found themselves again at the same spot from which they had been beguiled by the stranger, they saw that the day was about to break and the night was over. They discovered that almost for the whole night they were in that visionary mansion and the ball room. At this early morning hour, looking towards the east they saw in the distance the indistinct top of Clyffe-

Clump at the horizon and nearer, against its background, they saw the dark ancient mound of Rainbarrow over the graves, looking like the breast of a negro woman lying inclined on her back. The poet has compared the dark mound to the breast of a negro woman.

Lines 49—59. Yea—undoubtedly. Now they wake up from their dream or vision and find themselves in the familiar world of reality. **Gallants—**young lovers.

Explanation. The musicians finding themselves in the world of reality fully realized that not only the beautiful palace with its bright and grand things and ladies and lovers were surely gone but even the heaps of golden guineas which were given to them and which were lying on golden tables were also gone. Along with the vision their hard earned gold had disappeared.

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Lines 53—54. What was owed—what they possessed or was given to them. But one of them foolishly regretted their mistake in leaving the gold in heap without taking possession of it. If they had only taken it they would have perhaps brought it with them. This is what one of them said when the party was returning home with a sense of humiliation.

Lines 55—60. The marvel and the warning—now the strangest thing happened. They discovered something more astonishing than the vision and were cautioned in a strange manner against falling in such a danger again. **Dragged to church—**disappointment, and having the weird vision and take part in an unholy dance they went to Church slowly. **Down-cast heads—**bending their heads as if in shame. **Praises, showers—**they were overwhelmed by

the loud praises of the people. **For they hour**—for the excellent musical entertainment which they had given last night.

Explanation. But more marvellous than the vision was what happened that morning when they went to church. Feeling ashamed for their absence for the festivities of the night they were slowly going towards the church. They did not speak a word and their heads were bent low. But the assembled people were very loud and enthusiastic in their praises for the excellent musical entertainment they had given last night. This served as an admonition also to them, because they realized that the person who played the trick upon them was none other than the devil.

Lines 61—66. **Heard you many times**—we have heard your music on so many occasions during Christmas festivities. **But like that**—that with which you entertained us last night. **Never have you played**—you excelled all your performances of the previous years. **Rejoice ye . . . births**—let men feel happy that Christ was born on the earth to save mankind. This is the opening of the song which the people heard on that night when the musicians were playing in the Paphian Hall. Some persons exactly like them had come there in their absence and without their knowledge. Compare the religious spirit of this song and the one we heard in the hall. That was a love song. **Never so thrilled . . to do**—the audience never felt such an elation and religious fervour to follow Christ and resist the devil as they were inspired to feel by this song on this particular occasion.

Explanation. Their friends paid them the compliment of having excelled their own previous musical performances. Specially when they played the tune. **“Rejoice ye tenants of the earth, And celebrate**

your Saviour's birth"—the audience was thrilled with religious emotion and they seemed to have gained spiritual enlightenment and strength to resist the temptations of the devil.

Lines 67—70. Tenor-viol—'tenor' is the higher of the two kinds of voices usually belonging to adult males; the part next above the bass in a vocal quartet, 'viol' was a musical instrument which was the immediate precursor of the violin, having from three to six strings, and played by means of a bow. So the 'tenor-viol' means that person in the chorus who played upon the viol and sounded the tenor note. **Michael Mail**—the name of the musician who related this story. **Now but earth**—now lying in his grave. **I give it worth**—the poet names the person from whom he heard the story and leaves to the reader whether he believes and likes it or not.

Explanation. The poet describes the story as he heard from one of the musicians who saw the vision with others and at the same time was present at the night festivities of Christmas. He was Michael Mail, the tenor. That man is now dead. The reader may believe the story or not but the poet gives it as he learnt from Mail.

MARY WEBB

14. COLOMEN.

Life and Work.—Mary Webb, English novelist and poetess was born on March 25, 1881, at the village of Leighton in Shropshire, England. At the age of six she began to write verses in imitation of her father, who was an amateur poet. She also made paintings and sketches because her father was also interested in painting. For four years after reaching the age of ten she was helped in her studies by Miss M. Lory, and at fourteen she attended Mrs. Walmsley's finishing school at Southport, Lancashire. A serious illness diagnosed as Grave's disease overtook Mrs. Webb when she was twenty and during the long convalescence which followed she began to write essays and poems under the influence mainly of Shakespeare and A. E. Houseman. Her first literary production *The Spring of Joy*—a volume of twelve nature studies could not find a publisher. When she was thirty-one she was married to Henry Bertram Low Webb, a school master. The married life of Mrs. Webb was quite happy, although at one time the financial condition of the Webbs was so bad that Mary had to walk every evening five miles to sell flowers in order to eke out their paltry income. Among the most important books of Mary Webb are—*The Golden Arrow*, a novel of disillusionment and tragedy in love, *Gone to Earth*; *The House in Dower Forest* which when published was compared to Hardy's *The Return of the Native*; *Precious Bane*, which is called her most important work.

Mary Webb died in 1927, and her poems were collected for the first time in 1929.

Substance of the Poem.—The poem describes a love story which ends in a double tragedy and then brings about the ruin of a respectable house. There was a small thin lady who belonged to a high family. She was fond of doves and pigeons which she had tamed and kept in a dove-cote. She loved them and they were so obedient to her call that they would come and perch upon her arms and shoulders. At that time she appeared like a tree bent down with its blossoms. Once a painter came there and she fell in love with him. They used to meet secretly and he painted her picture. For about two months all went well and the picture was completed. But one day unfortunately the whole secret was out. When he was coming out of her chamber the lady's sister noticed him. The members of the family also came to know of the affair and the lover was secured and shot the next day. The lady was smitten with grief and finding life burdensome she committed suicide by hanging herself in her chamber. She left a line saying that her family would be ruined and that she would return to the house with her lover and haunt it. Her words came true and gradually the house was ruined and abandoned and not a single member of the family remained.

The pet doves had also left their dove-cote after the death of the lady. But since the house became haunted strange things happened there. If anybody visited the ruined house he would see only the picture of the dead lady and no other face was there. If the visitor's death was near he could see the doves and hear their cooings and he could see the apparition of the lady also. She could be seen standing and on her fair delicate person pigeons and doves perched as they used to do in her life-time, and she still appeared like a tree bending under the weight of its blossoms.

Remarks on the Poem.--The poetess has not confined herself merely to the simple narration of events in the romantic life of the lovers and their tragic end but has brought out the beauty and character of the unfortunate lady. Her life was as a matter of course uneventful before she met her lover. But we know her character. She was thin, small and quite unoffending by nature. She was so delicate and sensitive that it was impossible for her to survive any emotional storms. And unfortunately she was made the victim of a tragedy. We are surprised at her boldness when grief-stricken she goes out to hear her lover shot and more when she musters up courage to hang herself. She was innocent like her own pet doves but when the worst has happened and she has resolved to die she curses her family and like a Fury avenges herself even after death. Her instinctive sympathy, simple love and shall we say her kinship with the doves make her a complete picture of innocence. Love entered her life and not only possessed it but altered her whole nature.

The painter had his share of happiness in life however brief it was. His dream to dwell alone with her remained unfulfilled in this life, but greater than his martyrdom for love was his achievement in painting an exquisite portrait of the lady. His dream was realized when the spirit of his love joined him and they dwelt together in the abandoned house.

The element of supernaturalism has been introduced by the poetess with a great skill. There does not seem to be a violent break with the life upon the earth and life of the spirit. The lovers meet again, and soon enough, in the same house as they had desired. They are not greater sufferers in any way than the other members of the house who were cursed to death and ruin.

There are some fine passages in the poem which we enjoy, reading and admire. Only two instances may be given here :

*A haunted silence held the tower,
Where in the portrait's living eyes
Watched the dead lady with surprise,
Like a flower that gazes on a flower.*

And—

*The spiders move about the door
Intricate tapestries of time
That held the dew and held the rime.*

COLOMEN

Notes

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Lines 1—8. **Coo**—the sound emitted by doves. **Mortal men**—men who are subject to death but are at present alive. **But when** **grasses**—excepting when a man about to die and soon to be buried in a graveyard where grass would grow on his grave. **Deep voices**—wise and penetrating heart-felt tones. **Velvet-warm**—soft and warm like velvet. The voice is given this adjective. It is an instance of one sense perception expressed in terms of another. The voice is soft but at the same time it warms our heart or touches it. **Ancient perils**—the old dangers which men have encountered. **Storm long hushed**—storm which came and passed away long long ago. **Hopes withered and dead**—hopes which the dead man had entertained in his life time and which were never realized. **And joys a long** **harvested**—occasions of gladness which made him rejoice.

Explanation. So long as a man is alive he cannot hear the doves cooing in Colomen. He can hear

them only when his death is near. The doves tell him in soft but heart-felt notes the dangers encountered in life, difficult situations faced and hopes that were entertained and which remained unrealized, as well as the occasions when a certain person rejoiced.

Lines 9—20. **Oh, grave**.....**in**—she did not deserve to die and so her grave should not have welcomed her. **Her voice**..... **doves**—she always spoke in a deep plaintive tone. **Went softly**..... **yellow wheat**—she walked noiselessly through the fields where ripe wheat was growing. **Like the stars**.....**west**—just as bright stars suddenly and silently appear in the evening on the western horizon, so did her feet quietly trod the field of wheat. **Sunny cote**—the sun shone on the dove-cote. **As she called**—they were her pet doves and would come at her call. **Leaning so**—bending her body. **Feathers of rose and snow**—doves whose feathers were rosy and white as snow. **Wing of azure**..... **plume**—whose wings were blue and purple in colour. **Was like a slim**..... **bloom**—when the doves had sat upon her she appeared like a delicate tree bent under the weight of its blossoming flowers.

Explanation. There was a small thin lady whose early death is a matter of deep regret to the poet. She had a deep soft voice and she walked through the fields of ripe corn so softly and silently as the stars appear on the western horizon. She had a dove-cote which was high and round and the sun always shone upon it. From there she would call her doves and they would immediately obey her call. They would perch upon her arms and shoulders. When they all sat upon her with their many coloured feathers she appeared like a delicate tree bent down by the weight of its flowers.

Line 21—33. And still—even after her death. **They**—people. **When midsummer primrose**—when the last primrose is gone. **Arch**—clever, because it was the last and managed to linger longer than its fellows, already faded. **Hawthorn**—a shrub with white flowers much planted for hedges and ornament. **Wan as a pall**—pale as a covering of cloth. **Blackbird**—a species of thrush of a black colour.

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Shouted the sun up—as if the sun came up for its shouting. **Muted sound of wings**—subdued sound as of the fluttering of the wings of birds. **Ghostly flutterings**—because you hear the sound of the wings but see no birds. **If your death is near**—if you could see something then it indicated death at an early date. **A lady tree**—the same lady now dead and gone would appear as a ghost with birds perched upon her person and look like a tree bent with the weight of its flowers. **Long ago woe**—it was a long time when during her short life she enjoyed such intimate company of the birds, and separation from whom still troubled her soul.

Explanation. Though the lady is dead and gone yet her ghost haunts the ruined place. People say that in midsummer when the best primrose has faded and hawthorn petals get dried up and are shed, and it is early morning hour when the sun has just been greeted by blackbirds you can hear a subdued fluttering of the wings of birds which themselves are invisible. And if your time of death is near you may catch a glimpse of the lady's ghost with birds perched upon it and looking like a tree bent under the weight of its flowers. In her short life that was her only joy and now her separation for the pet birds her constant sorrow.

Lines 34—44. **April dawn of flame**—early morning in April when the eastern horizon was red with twilight and bright with the rising sun. **Through tasselled wood**—the dense wood through which it was difficult to find a way on account of the hanging branches and thick foliage. Tassel is a hanging ornament consisting of silk or other material. **Beheld the lady**—of course when she was alive. In the last lines the mention is of the sight of her ghost. **Trembling when the air is still**—she is compared to a delicate pale flower which trembles even when there is no wind. **Broken wild**—the petals of which are scattered when the wind is high. **Looked on him and smiled**—she fell in love with him. **Woe woe air**—it is a matter of sorrow that the travelling painter was the last lover who came to Colomen and after him no other lover has even come in the early morning hours.

Explanation. When the lady was alive once a travelling painter came to Colomen on a bright April morning. He came crossing the thick forest and saw the lady in her tower. She looked like a wild delicate flower beneath the hill which quivers even when there is no wind and a storm, of course, it cannot stand. She was so thin and delicate that her heart could not possibly bear any strain of violent emotions. She saw the painter and fell in love with him, and greeted him with her smile. But unfortunately the painter was the last lover who ever came to Colomen.

Lines 45—57. **Dear decked hair**—there were no flowers in her hair. It was decorated with the pearly drops of dew. It was early morning in April that he saw her first. **Lilac**—a pretty flowering shrub, with a flower of light purple colour. **Saw her beauty her sweet**—the lilac flower was ashamed to find the lady's beauty better than its own, and so

being ashamed it shed all its brightness and sweet smell. The poet's idea is that the lilac flower which adorned her hair had fallen down in the morning and now only dew drops remained there like pearls. The flowers had shed all their glory as if ashamed of the contrast with her beautiful face. **Dove-grey dawns**—in the early morning when sunlight appeared grey coloured. **Their lips meet**—the travelling painter and the lady would meet. **In the tower**—in a secret room on the ground floor. **Where the drowsy seldom**—where the rays of the sun the rising and setting would not easily penetrate. The sunlight is called 'drowsy' because the part is speaking of the morning or evening hours. At noon of-course no sunlight could reach them.

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The air half asleep—there could be no gusts of wind in that dark ground-floor room. The air seemed to come as if by stealth and drowsily. **While stillness mote**—even the small particles which we see floating in a ray of light in a dark room did not move. So silent and quiet was that chamber. **Croonings**—low murmuring sounds. **Ivied cote**—the dove-cote which had become covered with ivy. **Like summer seas shore**—the sound of the sea in summer on some enchanting shore.

Explanation. In the morning when the painter saw her, he noticed her hair adorned with the pearly dew. The lilac flowers on her hair ashamed of contrast had shed their sweetness and glory. In the early morning before sunrise the painter and the lady would secretly meet in a ground-floor room of the tower where the sunlight reached very seldom and even the air seemed to be drowsy and breathless. All was so quiet there that the mote also seemed to have been fixed up in one position. Low murmuring

sounds of birds in the dove-cote, covered with ivy fell upon their ears like the music of waves on the summer sea on an enchanting shore.

Lines 58—65. **The boding wind**—the wind moaned presaging a calamity. **Moand of loss**—it is superstition that a particular kind of moaning sound is heard at sea when a sailor is about to die. Here the reference to a particular kind of ominous sound produced by the wind and fore-telling a calamity. **The boding feet**—the cross bars of a window threw a shadow like a cross at their feet in the chamber where the lovers met. The sign of a dark cross pre-saged death or some evil to both of them. **Heart-broken sweet clamour**—the doves made a sound which seemed like the cry of a broken-hearted lover. **Eerie**—exciting fear; weird; affected with fear. **They did not hear or understand**—the lovers failed to take note of ominous signs. **How soon day**—they did not know that love was like a delicate flower which in a brief time loses its charm or vanishes.

Explanation. But unfortunately their secret love-making was soon to come to a dismal end. The moaning of the wind ominous shadow of the bars of a window falling at their feet in the form of a dark cross pre-saged the coming evil. They also heard the soft sounds of birds breaking into a cry as they were frightened by something weird. But the simple lovers did not suspect any thing wrong. They did not know that the course of love was very brief and like a flower suddenly withering in frost love too was an ephemeral thing in the world.

Lines 66—79. **When the shadows the roof**—before the doves had been let out of the cote to fly. **Clover**—a genus of plants containing a great number of species, natives chiefly of temperate climates, affording rich pasturage. **Bees' low up**—murmur

of the bees could be heard. **An ethereal sweet air**—heavenly or spin-like atmosphere. **He had . . . him**—the poet did merely observe her outward form and appearance but could catch her angelic nature and her very spirit when she came to meet him secretly. The portrait depicted her features faithfully and at the same time brought out her inner self and real loving character. Her very nature stood revealed in the portrait. **Her soul . . . threshold**—her hidden nature became manifest. **For ever**—in the picture the figure will remain unchanged. **Silver fairy**—the description of her white delicate person, beautiful like that of a fairy. **May-tree**—the hawthorn which blooms in May. **He told her . . . delight**—the happy life together which he had been fondly dreaming of. **Alone and aloof**—one being the whole world for the other. **Crooning**—making a low murmuring sound.

Explanation. One early morning on a summer day he completed her portrait. When he was giving it the last touches the doves were still in the cote and the bees' murmur from the clover could be distinctly heard. He painted her a thin small pale girl with a heavenly atmosphere surrounding her. He did not merely paint a faithful likeness but her features brought out her inner nature. Her real loving character could be discerned in these features. He had been able to catch a glimpse of her very spirit when she came out to meet him secretly. In the picture she had a standing pose with a beautiful wood for the back-ground and a hawthorn bush beside her all steeped in moonlight. The painter had told her what happiness he was dreaming of in her company when they would be living together absorbed in each other while the doves would be cooing from above.

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Lines 80—85. **Painted through**—throughout the period. **A sapphire June**—throughout the whole month of June with its clear blue sky. **Into a**—till the month of. **Thunderous July**—when the clouds and rains come in July. **Alas! spring**—what a pity that spring time is so brief. **How joy**—all those things which make life enjoyable are fleeting doves which fly away so soon. **In an evil lower**—it was a misfortune that one evil day the painter while leaving the lady's room he was seen going by her sister. Thus the secret was out.

Explanation. The painter began the portrait in the clear month of June and continued his work on it till the rainy month of July. It is a pity that the joyful time of life is so brief. He was happy in his work and her company, but he was not vouchsafed this bliss for long. Unfortunately he was seen by the lady's sister when he was leaving her chamber and thus the secret of their love was out and the whole thing came to a bitter end.

Lines 86—89. **For all her grace**—though she was a simple pretty girl of the country. **Hers was race**—yet her people were proud and naughty. Her own simple graceful nature was different from that of her people. **Lordly**—on master-foot, quick to avenge an insult. **They sent . . . love**—they sent soldiers in search of her lover, the painter. **Press-gang**—a detachment of men employed, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, under the command of an officer empowered to force men into military and, especially, naval service.

Explanation. You could not judge the temper of the people who were haughty, proud and quick to resent an insult. She was no doubt a simple pretty

girl but her people were masterful. When it was quite dark at night and the sky was overcast with clouds they sent a detachment of soldiers in search of the painter.

Lines 90—94. All day—throughout the whole day waiting for the result of the search of her lover, whose life was in danger now. **The memoried cote**—the dove-cote which was her favourite thing and more so because it had now become associated with his memory also. **Wheeled**—circled over her head. **They thought her dead**—the doves receiving no loving attention from her thought that she had died. **But in her slumbered**—she was not dead but overwhelmed with sorrow her wild eyes showed signs of horror.

Explanation. While the search party had gone out she remained the whole day in the agony of suspense sorrowing for the fate of her lover. She was lying so still and motionless near the favourite dove-cote that the doves which circled over her head took her to be dead. Her wild eyes were full of sadness for fear of some horrible deed. She was deeply in grief on contemplating the fate of her lover.

Lines 95—107. **When next bee**—the next morning when bees went to clover for honey. **Where was she**—imagine. Can you rightly guess? **Dragged limbs**—with difficulty she walked from her chamber, because her limbs which had lost their colour and strength had become stiff and too feeble to bear the burden of her slim body. **To hear the sound wound**—her lover was going to be shot and she went there to hear the report of the guns though it was sure to pierce her already wounded heart. **Made her agony keen**—her sorrow at her lover's death and her bereavement was made all the more poignant. **If she held her feet of death**—if she

only stopped breathing she could almost hear the approach of death. **Thronging around**—all her doves and pigeons gathered round her and cooed, as if sympathising with her, whereas her own relatives were making a hell of her life.

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But with snow bloom—how different she looked at this time from what she looked when perched upon her. Now weighed down with her sorrow she appeared like a tree which is bent down by snowfall. **Bent lower tomb**—she was overwhelmed with grief which would end her life as a tree dies on account of snowfall.

Explanation. The next morning, surprising as it may appear, she went out of her chamber and proceeded to the grey lawn where her lover, who had been captured and secured, was going to be shot down. She wanted to hear the sound of shots, though she knew that it would pierce her already wounded heart. She was at that moment too much overwhelmed with grief that if she had held her breath one could even hear the approaching footsteps of death. She stood there with outstretched arms and her pigeons and doves gathered round her and cooed in sympathy at her sorrow. But at this moment she looked quite different from what she appeared when the doves perched upon her. Now she was like a tree bent down by a snowfall, because her sorrow was soon to bring an end to her life.

Lines 108—115. **She would joy**—now that her lover was assassinated she would lay down her own burdensome life which others found so enjoyable. **The littleness life**—life which was valued like a precious thing by others was worthless for her. **As birds are free**—she desired

freedom. **Spirit fair**—the portrait already described was so exquisitely beautiful that the figure in it appeared like that of a spirit. **With these written**—she left behind a line for her relations. **We come again Colomen**—the lady with her lover will return as spirits to that very house and see that no other living person will live there.

Explanation. In her distress and bereavement life lost all charms for her and she wanted to give it up in order to win her freedom. Life to which man clings was of no value to her and so the next morning she hanged herself in her tower by the side of her portrait which looked so beautiful and ethereal. Expressing her desire to avenge for her lover's murder she left behind a line saying that they would both return as spirits to the house of Colomen live there driving out all other inmates and thus ruin the family.

Lines 116—123. High against dawn—against the multi-coloured eastern horizon at dawn. **Fawn**—resembling a fawn, a young deer, in colour. **Mottled**—marked with spots of colours and shades. **Wheeled in the air**—circling in the sky. **They**—the cousins. **Around fell**—in spite of their loud lamentation there was a kind of weird silence prevailing in the tower where her dead body was. **They could cloud**—so high did the birds fly that they disappeared in the clouds. When her spirits was gone how could they remain in the tower or dove-cote ?

Explanation. The discovery of the tragedy was made by her cousins in the morning when the pigeons of all the varied colours and spots were circling high in the sky against the bright horizon. But the relations were weeping aloud and still they could not disturb a weird stillness in the tower. Gradually

the pigeons rose so high in the sky that they seemed to have disappeared in clouds. How could they remain upon the earth when her spirit had flown away ?

Lines 124—127. A haunted.....tower— a weird stillness, undisturbed in any way, prevailed in the tower. **Wherein.....surprise—**in the tower she was lying dead with her eyes closed, and her portrait with its life-like eyes, seemed to be looking at the dead body with an expression of surprise in its looks. These two are very beautiful lines. The painter is praised indirectly for the life-like portrait which can express feelings and emotions in colour and live; and at the same time we have the poet's fancy that the picture is now more living than the body lying there. **Like a flower that fades....flower—**no better illustration could be found than the one the poet has luckily hit up.

Explanation. In the lovely tower there was a weird silence which could not be easily disturbed. The dead body of the lady seemed to be watched in surprise by the life-like eyes of her portrait hanging by. It was as if one flower was gazing at another.

Lines 128—157. No doves returned.....more—after the death of the lady the doves also deserted that tower. **The spiders.....door—**the tower became desolate and no body went inside. The spiders fearless of any molestation, move their webs near the door kept shut for long.

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Intricate tapestries of time—a beautiful expression for cobwebs. The cobwebs woven with rare skill by spiders indicate a neglect of the place for a long time. **Tapestries—**ornamental textiles used for the covering of walls and furniture, and for curtains and hangings. Cobwebs have now taken the place

of tapestries. **Tapestries of time**—such cobwebs are generally found in old, ruined and neglected buildings and so they are the work of time. **Rime**—hoar-frost; frozen dew. **Held**.....**rime**—dew and hoar-frost fell upon the cobwebs. **Strand**—the margin or beach of the sea or of a lake. **Like water from a frozen strand**—just as water ceases to flow from the margin or beach of the sea or a lake when it has become frozen there. **Failed the**.....**men**—you failed to bear the voices of men and women coming from that house. The house became gradually deserted and inmates began to die. **Shrivelled**—contracted into wrinkles; were wasted. **Shrivelled**.....**hand**—courage, vigour, affectionateness were gone and so did the possessions, and the power to retain them. **Arching wood**—wooden arches which supported the roof of the hall. **No face**.....**face**—no members of the family were to be found. Only the picture of the lady was there. **Sadly intermittently**—some times they cooed and that too at long intervals. **Wheeling**.....**here**—the doves can be seen only by those who are to die soon. **A picture, glassy clear**—and see a figure which looks transparently clear. **Where the**.....**calls**—this is the particular spot where the figure is seen. **Voicing**.....**woe**—as if giving expression to the grief of the lady which she suffered long ago. **Very fair**.....**scented air**—then they are her apparition which is very fair and delicate and surrounded by the fragrant air. **Tapestry**.....**faded**—the colours are soft and subdued as of old tapestries. **But down with blossoms**—the old figure of the happy innocent days, before the double tragedy took place, is repeated.

Explanation. After the death of the lady the doves also left the place. The doors of her chamber

were covered with cobwebs which took the place of tapestries, and on them hoar-frost and dew fell. Gradually men and women of the house began to die. They lost their affectionateness and vigour as well as their property. Soon a time came when in its halls no living being was to be seen. The prophecy of the lady was fulfilled. Her own picture was still there. Sometimes the cooing of the doves was heard and the doves too became visible only to those whose death was near. Such persons could see a clear transparent figure also at a particular spot where the hawthorn shrub had stood and blackbird mourned on the elm tree. It was then that the doves too began to coo as if they moaned in sympathy for the old grief of the dead lady. It was then that the apparition of the lady could be seen. It appeared very fair and delicate in the scented air; and as of old on its arms the doves would perch and shine dimly in their multi-coloured feathers. The colours of the birds would be reflected on her form and again, as of old, she resembled a tree bent down with the weight of its blossoms.

WALTER DE LA MARE

15. THE OLD ANGLER

Life and Work.—Walter De La Mare, British poet and novelist, of Hugneuoet descent, was born on April 25, 1873, at Charlton, Kent. He was educated in London at St. Paul's Cathedral Choir School. He was in business from 1889—1908, but his first poems had already appeared in 'The Cornhill' and other magazines. In 1901 was published his *Songs of Childhood* and three years later appeared the novel *Hewy Brocken*. He received a grant from the Privy Purse and this enabled him to devote himself to literature fully. *The Return* (1910) won for him the Polignac Prize. *The Listeners and other Poems* (1912), *Peacock Pie* (1913) *Motley and other Poems* (1918) brought him to the front rank of his contemporaries. *His Collected Poems* (1901—1911) appeared in 1920. *Crossings*, his first play was published in 1921. *Memoirs of a Midget* (1921) a long novel won him a reputation and heirship of Maeterlinck tradition. Later he published stories *The Riddle* (1924), *Broomsticks* (1925), *The Connoisseur and other Stories* (1926). His other writings include *Stuff and Nonsense* (1927); *Stories from the Bible* (1929), *Desert Islands* (1930), *On the Edge and Poems for Children* (1930) and *The Fleeting and other Poems* (1933).

His characteristics as a Poet.—The poetry of De La Mare has an elusive and delicate charm. It is difficult to catch into tangible shape the spirit of his poetry, just as it is difficult to analyse the elfin grace and delicacy of Coleridge's imaginative pieces—*Kubla Khan*, *Christabel* or *The Ancient Mariner*. But the

magic effect of both the poets with the characteristic difference of their age is the same. De La Mare has been one of the few moderns whose work seems to be the lovely survival from the age of romance.

Partly from instructive inclination and partly from studied plan like Coleridge De La Mare has created a fairy, twilight world, a world of wonder and phantasy which is the home of perpetual youth. He succeeds in creating atmosphere like the best of the romantists, but the work is so cunningly above that no suspicion of contriving crosses the reader's brain. Other poets' magic spell works in shadow and twilight, but De La Mare has also succeeded in creating the feeling of wondering awe out of the full light of a summer day. This manifestation of the weird and the strange springs out of the love of the supernatural. Such a poem is *The Witch* which seems to be the work of pure phantasy.

The lure of the weird in De La Mare has a definite relation to his philosophy. It is apparently rooted in an extreme sensitiveness to psychic influences through which he becomes acutely conscious of the presence of a surrounding spirit world, and deeply sympathetic and tender to sub-human creatures. But the mysterious charm of a poem like *The Listeners* goes deeper.

Together with this elusive quality of the poet in creating artistic pieces of delicate fancy there is through all such writings an undertone of melancholy, and an atmosphere of gloom. It is like silvery, transparent cloud of thoughtfulness which passes for a moment over a happy face. In *All That's Past* melancholy is toned to the faintest strain of pensive sweetness. There are poems in which feelings of phantasy and melancholy are inextricably interwo-

ven. *Arabia, Voices* possess the charm of the romantic works of Coleridge.

De La Mare has yet another quality which distinguishes him. It is humanity combined with simplicity and sincerity of diction. His desire to free himself from the intolerable burden of civilization leads him not to nature like Wordsworth but to visions of childhood. But his imagination and intellect are fully adult. He is a poet of silence and solitary creatures. Besides that he is an expert artist but his exquisite craftsmanship does not betray him into preoccupation with a mere artifice, nor does the dream quality of his verse separate him from consciousness of reality.

Blake brought the animal creation into poetry. This phase of humanitarianism comes out in Walter De La Mare's poetry. From his humane temper come the poet's kindly feelings for animals and his affectionate understanding of them.

Substance of the Poem.—It is evening time and an old angler is seen quietly sitting in his boat and fishing. His basket is empty and it is clear that he has caught no fish so far. The pool is clear and calm and its water is reflecting the beautiful twilight colours. On looking closer the angler appears to be a silent, meditative and sad person. All his life he has been angling. But as in fishing so in life, he does not seem to have been a successful man. He seems to have little interest left in angling as disappointment is deeply impressed upon his face.

But suddenly he finds that he has looked something. Carefully and cautiously he pulls out the line and hopes to catch a fish. He is astonished to find that the object hooked is not a fish but something strange, and soon discovers that it is a beautiful

water nymph, with her golden hair and slim body. The nymph comes up on the surface of the water but utters a shrill cry which echoed all over the pool and pierced the heart of the angler. He can say nothing to console or to quiet down her fear. She fixes her gaze upon him and allows herself to be pulled by him near the boat. She is unresisting and yielding. Looking at the beautiful figure of the nymph thoughts and fancies rush into his mind. He has secured a prize but only when he is too old to value it. All his life has been wasted in fruitless efforts and disappointments. Lost in his thoughts he yet tries to secure her and he plunges his fingers in her golden hair. His fingers touch the hook entangled in her hair and clench her teeth and he is alarmed. Taking out his knife he snaps the cord and she jumps away making herself free from his grip. He is in despair and she mocks at him with a cruel heartless laugh and soon disappears. The old angler is left alone there brooding over all that has just happened. He discovers that the night is over and the day is about to break. He still goes for angling but now even hope has forsaken him. A long man broken and disappointed he is now once more careless than before and forgets to fasten a bait to the hook.

Remarks on the poem.—The melancholy picture of the old angler always moody, silent and dejected reminds us of the famous Rip Van Winkle of Washington Irving. The nature of his work in life makes him what he is. Whose fault if fish won't bite? But there are unfortunate persons who have to suffer for no obvious faults in them. They win no prizes, they never know a windfall in a lifetime. Our old angler is such an unfortunate man. Perhaps his disappointment would have quieted down all disturbing hopes and allowing dreams and a kind of peace would

have settled over his soul. But as, fate plays with him and gives him a more cruel blow on the end than any disappointment has so far inflicted upon him. When he has dreamt away life a glorious chance occurs. Hope rises. He clutches the hen which promises golden eggs. But soon it eludes his grasp and vanishes leaving him more desolate than ever. Is it not a painful fact that by drawing rosy pictures of our prospects we only wurt disappointment. Hope for nothing and you will never be disappointed. But the weakest foundation we always begin to build and build castles in the air.

Walter de la Mare has created in the poem a fairy twilight world where the borders of the real and the unreal meet. The poem is the produce of delicate fancy and allows us glimpses in the depths of the human heart, its reviving hopes and deeper disappointments. The love of the supernatural, the vivid and the strange which is a characteristic of De la Mare's poetry are fully revealed in the poem. There is not much of action or incident yet the poem is changed with something which has a deep significance for life and its experiences. The underlove of gloom and melancholy, can be distinctly heard. The spirit of evening sadness suffuses the whole poem. Are not the moth and the water-rat happier than the old angler? They are, because they see no dreams.

THE OLD ANGLER

Notes

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Stanzas 1 and 2. Twilight leaned mirrored in a pool —the evening twilight, with its beautiful colours, was reflected in the water of a pool. **Willow**—a tree

having slender pliant branches. Its leaves hang downwards and so poets call it 'the weeping willow.' **Swept green and hoar**—the leaves of willow are green on one side and whitish on the other. So when the wind passes through the tree and the leaves quiver they appear green and white by turns. **Hoar**—white. **Silk-clear**—shining like silk. **Weedy shore**—the bank of the pool overgrown with weed. **Abstracted brooding mood**—lost in deep thought. **Sate**—the poetic form of 'sat.' **Painted float**—the cork or quill on the fishing line. It was painted. **Motionless as stood**—his small boat was standing quite still, lest it disturbed fish. It was so still in the water as a planet is in the sky. The movement if any was imperceptible.

Explanation. It was evening time when a small fishing boat was lying in a pool and an angler's painted raft as motionless as a planet in the sky. In the boat was sitting a man fishing but lost in thought. The twilight of the evening was reflected in the shining calm and cool waters of the pool.

Stanza 3. A melancholy soul was his—he was an unhappy man without any joy in life. **Lantern jaw**—thin long jaw; thin faced. **Gnarled**—knotty; twisted. **Vague eye**—eyes without the spark of intelligence; vacant looks. **Huddled in**—crowded together in confusion; put on hastily. **Pensive solitariness**—moody loneliness. **Fished existence by**—had spent all his life in fishing. **Huddled by**—living in seclusion and always remaining lost in thought he had spent all his life in fishing.

Explanation. This man was unhappy and had a thin face, knotty hands and vacant looks. He had spent all his life in fishing; and most of his time was passed in seclusion, generally losing himself in thought.

Stanza 4. Creel—a basket, especially an angler's basket. **Stolen his bait**—fish would take away the bait without swallowing it and avoid being caught. **Impassively on**—he would go on fishing without taking any active interest in his work and feeling no pain or joy.

Exp'lation. Though the day had come to an end and with the mist darkness prevailed, the angler continued his fishing without minding any discomfort, so far he had not been able to catch any fish and his basket was quite empty. Even the bait was taken away by fish though none was caught.

Stanza 5. Like a tongueless bell—the dome-shaped part of a bell without the striking gong. **Downwards glide**—the painted raft with a jerky motion went down. **Gaudy cork**—painted raft on a fishing-line. **Swell**—a wave or billow in one direction.

Explanation. All of a sudden the painted raft of the fishing-line went down the water like a diving bell; and immediately it went down gentle waves widening into circles appeared on the surface of water.

Stanza 6. Wheeped out—quickly took out. **Tackle**—net, line etc. used in fishing. **Winch**—the reel for winding the string. **Furtive**—stealthy; secret.

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Nerve intense—excited nerves. **Line**—slender cord. **No longer numb**—because taken out of water.

Explanation. The angler was excited with expectation and he quietly, like a thief, raised up the cord and wound it noiselessly on the reel. The cord had dried up by the time it came out of water.

Stanzas 7 and 8. **Fabulous spoil**—amazing haul. **Unplayed**—without struggling to escape. **Gape**—stare with open mouth. **Mortal air**—came up to the surface of the water and in open air to die. For fishes air is mortal because they die in open air. **Engrossed**—closely attentive. **Tanned**—tawny on account of the heat of the sun. **Greyed**—flushed a little. **Fairing**—one's deserts; a present or gift. **Beneath seen**—under the clear water which was slightly disturbed by raising of the hooked object. **Swims**—comes up lightly without resistance. **Not the silver of scale and fin**—not an ordinary fish with scales, fins and white colour. **But gold green**—but some other object of the golden colour which (the colour), was mingling with the green of the water.

Explanation. The angler was anxious to know what marvellous fish he had hooked which was coming up without any resistance, and he soon hoped to see a big fish with wide open mouth dying on rising into the air. He was very attentive at that moment and in his excitement the tawny colour of his face also changed. His heart stopped beating when he saw under the clear water not a fish coming up but something golden and greenish swimming to come up to the surface of the water.

Stanza 9. **Deeply astir in oozy bed**—the violent movement in the water above a sandy and muddy bed. **The darkening rocks**—the surface of the water is disturbed by the hauling up of the catch and so its stillness and clearness are gone.

Explanation. Now that the catch is coming up the water is disturbed and it loses its transparency and stillness. To the surprise of the angler a beautiful pale head appears with the hook entangled in its hair.

Stanza 10. **Cold from** **haunt**—having just come from her abode in water, she is cold to touch. **Naiad**—one of the female divinities of a lower rank with whom the Greeks peopled all parts of nature. The Naiads were nymphs of fresh water, whether of rivers, lakes, brooks or springs. **Slim**—delicate and thin. **Gleamed ivory white**—she was fair but looked fairer because her body was wet.

Explanation. The catch proved to be a river-nymph who looked white as ivory as her skin was met and she had just come from her abode under water. She had a delicate and graceful figure. But by this time stars had begun to appear in the sky and the darkness of the night was to be soon upon him

Stanzas 11 and 12. **Her green eyes** **half blind**—because the eyes were not accustomed to the light of the open air. **In sudden radiance**—dazzled by a flash of light. **Twined**—twisted together; encircled.

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Webbed hands—hands having skin between the fingers. **Scentless**—because dry and light. **Dewing**—falling in drops like dew. **Tinkling**—making sharp small sound. **Beadlike**—like small balls of glass.

Explanation. Though the light was very dim on account of the evening her eyes were dazzled by the light and she gazed as if she was half-blind. She breathed the fresh air and her hands with their webs she pressed against the cold water. Lightly she floated like a dry flower and drops from her hair fell down like heads making a tinkling sound.

Stanza 13. *Explanation.* She came swimming along the boat of the angler and uttered such a plaintive cry, expressing her grief that it was heard echoing

over the whole pool before it was stilled. Her cry was as pathetic as that of the nightingale.

Stanza 14. Ceased echo—when her shrill cry became silent. **A life's remorse welled to**—the angler was extremely grieved and never did he grieve so much ever before, because he had unintentionally hooked a naiad. **Unapt to charm**—not accustomed to speak charming and sweet words. **But never alarm**—but the angler could not utter a single word, if not sweet, at least harsh and hoarse, in order to allay her fear.

Explanation. The cry of the naiad ceased and its echo also melted away. But the poor angler who knew little refinement of speech, though stung with remorse, could not say a word—even in a hoarse voice in order to allay the fear of the naiad.

Stanzas 15 and 16. With infinite stealth—most cautiously. **Twitching**—pulling suddenly; a spasmodic contraction of the muscles. **Tugged**—pulled with effort. **Tautened gut**—tightened cord. **Bubble-light**—as light as a bubble in water. **Set**—fixed. **Unearthly eyes**—weird looking. **Pale gleaming**—shining with a yellowish colour. **Couched**—laid herself down as if to sleep or rest. **With quickening sighs**—repeating her sighs at shorter intervals.

Explanation. The angler now most cautiously and gently pulled the tightened cord and strange to say she without offering any resistance came floating near him. She was quite dumb now, looked very fair and was as light as a bubble. But her eyes were fixed and had a pale weird look, perhaps because she was afraid. Her sighs quickened and she lay restful upon water.

Stanzas 17, 18 and 19. In hollow heaven—the dome of the sky. **Were at play**—as if playing hide and

seek because some had come out and others were playfully waiting to keep out. **Wan glow-worms**
 **grass**—glow-worms shed their feeble pale light on the grass growing by the bank of the pool. **Greened the pool-side grass**—at night the grass there had become dark, its colour becoming invisible. But the glow-worms shedding their light made the grass appear in its own colour. **Dipped**—because the angler had pulled the naiad near. **Alas**—because she was unresisting. The angler pitied himself and felt sorry that he was old and not a young man when he could have prized her better.

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Long sterile **gone**—his long life had been wasted. **Youth** **sped**—his youth too had vanished like a dream without making him happy in its time. **Heart, hope,** **hungered on**—once it was his dream in life to satisfy his affectionate nature, to hope for a happy life and to feed his eyes on visions of beauty. But all in vain. **He turned a shaking head**—the wasted youth could not return and he had met the nymph so late in life. He expressed sorrow and disappointment. **Clumsily groped** **gold**—in an indignant manner thrust his fingers in her golden hair. **Sleek**—soft and glossy. **Tangling hair**—long hanging hair in a mass. **Till pricked** **there**—till his cold fingers clasped the hook which was entangled in the hair.

Explanation. The stars were coming out one by one and glow-worms were shedding their faint light on the bank of the pool making the green grass visible. As the angler had pulled the nymph the big bottomed boat inclined a little in water, and the nymph still looked at him with wide open eyes and stopped her breathing. But the angler felt keenly the loss of his youth and wasted life, all his hopes of

love and happiness having remained unrealized. He had met the nymph too late in life. He thrust his cold knotty fingers in the golden hair of the nymph till he clutched the hook which was entangled there.

Stanzas 20 and 21. Teeth clenched—she was enraged and so set her teeth firmly. **He drew his knife**—how soon the dream of happiness is gone. Now he is anxious to save his life and to kill her. **Snip snip**—the sound of suddenly cutting of something. Here it is the sound of cutting the line or the cord. **Groaned**—the angler groaned. **Shook her free**—escaped from the clutches of the angler. **Infatuate fair**—the foolish nymph. **His life's disasters in her eyes**—in her smiling eyes he saw his own disappointment and utter desolation. **Longing and folly**—the sad mistakes he had committed and the foolish thing he had desired.

Explanation. The unresisting nymph got suddenly enraged and set her teeth firmly. He too drew his knife and quickly cut off the line. He was grieved and sat down trembling in the boat with a heavy heart. The nymph just dived down and escaped like a floating bird and was happy at her freedom. Moving at a little distance the foolish nymph smiled at him and in her eyes he saw his utter disappointment and ruined life. He realized his folly in cherishing wild hopes and thus courting disappointment and bitterness in life.

Stanzas 22 and 23. She stooped her brow—bent her face down. **Silk-stressed craft**—curls of hair soft like silk. **Craft**—small slip. **Silk-stressed craft**—is the fair body of the nymph on which her hair was falling in tresses. **Out of the listening**—so that the angler may not hear. **Leaf hung creek**—winding which was partly concealed by the hanging leaves of tress. **Tossed up her chin**—looked up in derision. **A**

mocking **note**—in a cruel heartless manner laughed the angler. **Flashed** **breast**—he had a last glimpse of her white breast. **Dead-still the boat**—as if nothing had happened. **The deep dark at rest**—the darkness of night was not at all disturbed. The poet means that silence and darkness prevailed.

Explanation. The nymph having freed herself from the angler behaved in a tantalizing and mocking manner. She bent down her face, easily glided away towards a creek partly covered with leaves, then laughed at him in a very cruel heartless manner. One more glimpse of her person she allowed him and then disappeared. There was nothing left but darkness and silence and the motionless boat.

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Stanzas 24 and 25. Flits moth to flower—the usual phenomena of nature are happening quite unconcerned with the fate of the angler. **Water-rat**—the popular name of the water-vole; the American muskrat. **Noses**—as if smelling it or striking with its nose. **Streams a lost meteor**—a shooting star makes a bright streak of light in heaven. **And daybreak zephyrs flow**—the morning breeze is blowing. The angler does not know that the whole night has passed. **Zephyrs**—the west wind; a soft gentle breeze. **And cheated?**—and what has happened to the cheated angler! **Dusk till morn**—for the whole night. **Insensate**—stupid; wanting in sense. **Even of hope forsook**—he was abandoned even by hope which springs eternal in our hearts and sustains us. **Squats**—sits down upon the hams or heels. **Dangling** **hook**—he is fishing like a foolish person without putting a bait on the hook and so never can he catch a single fish.

Explanation. The phenomena of nature go on as

usual never caring for the cheated and disappointed angler. Moths are flying to flowers, water-rats are happy in the rippling water. A meteor shoots from the sky and the morning breeze is gently blowing. The angler is at her old job but now the last traces of hope are gone from his heart and he in his solitariness, like an abandoned person, goes on fishing but it is impossible for him to catch any fish because in his despair he does not attach a bait to the hook.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

16. LEPANTO.

Life and Work—G. K. Chesterton, English poet, author and journalist, was born in London on May 29, 1874. He was educated at St. Paul's School, after leaving it, went to study art but his bent of mind was literary. He devoted himself to apprenticeship of free-lance journalism, occasional receiving and work in a publisher's office.

In 1900 his volume of poems 'The Wild Knight' was published. Thereafter he became a regular contributor to *The Speaker* and *The Daily News*. He showed his fine critical sense by his brilliant study of Browning in the 'English Men of Letters' series. The book was published in 1903. This was followed by his *Charles Dickens* which is described as "one of the best critical studies in language" *Orthodoxy* (1908) and *What's Wrong With the World* (1910) succeeded *Heretics* as essays in religious thought and contemporary politics. He showed a hatred of Victorian pessimists. Victorian party politics, and industrial capitalism. He is one of the most active of our modern writers. He is a regular contributor to the *Illustrated London News* and other journals. He keeps himself in evidence in many literary and journalistic quarters and handles social questions, art, politics, and criticism with equal dexterity and audacity.

In his fiction too he expresses his ideas on various problems. *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904), *The Club of Queer Grades* (1905), *The Man who was Thursday* (1908) and *The Bell and the Cross* (1909)—all these show his tendency to commingle philosophy with

fiction. Side by side with these he produced light verse which has been called by a critic comic poetry. His more serious verse has given him the rank of the great rhetorical poets. He is at his best in *Lepanto* (1911) and *A Song of the Wheel*. *The Ballad of the White Horse* is uneven but it contains some of his best poems.

In 1913 he wrote *Victorian Age in Literature* and made a fine case of Swinburne with whom he had little in common. The same year saw the production of *Magic*, a play. In 1922 he entered Catholic faith, but his general trend remained the same. During the war he produced no remarkable work. His later work include *The Superstition of Divorce* (1920), *The New Jerusalem* (1920), *What I saw in America* (1922), *St. Francis of Assisi* (1923), *William Cobbet* (1925), *The Everlasting Man* (1925) and *The Judgement of Doctor Johnson* (1927). He published a volume of *New and Collected Poems* in 1927. His other works are *Robert Louis Stevenson* (1927), *The Secret of Father Brown* (1927), *Generally Speaking* (1926), *The Poet and the Lunatics* (1929), *Catholic Essays* (1929), *The Resurrection of Rome* (1930), *All is Grist* (1931), *Chaucer* (1932), *All I survey* (1933) and *St. Thoman Acquires* (1933).

As a Poet.—G.K. Chesterton to many is known as a brilliant journalist who is full of paradoxes, an essayist in all subjects, and a writer of fantastic novels. But his true genius reveals itself in criticism. His critical estimate of Dickens and Chaucer are pieces of acute sense of appreciation. Besides that he is a poet.

In the field of poetry Chesterton's most significant achievement is his *Ballad of the White Horse*. Here we find original ideas, paradoxes, optimism, and a masculine faith in the goodness of being alive. The

ballad has all the qualities of a folk-ballad, but it is marred by intrusive didacticism with which he preaches the blessing of Christianity and the nationalism of the pagan, the ancient equivalent of the modern agnostic. The story of the ballad is King Alfred's deliverance of the land from Norsemen, but he predicts the coming heathens not as barbarians but mild and with the powers of darkness.

*'The men of the East may spell the stars,
And times and triumphs mark,
But the men signed of the cross of Christ
Go gaily in the dark'.*

The poem celebrates the conquest of agnosticism by Christianity. Were the message omitted it would be a stirring poem. It has in its narrative the fine objective manner of the old ballad. There is another poem also—*The ballad of St. Barbara* but it has no compelling story interest.

Among his satirical poems the best is the twelve-line *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*. Compared with the *Elegy* there is an absurd ponderous air of humourless inflation about *Anti-Christ Thy Reunion of Christiandom* is an ode in which Chesterton attacks F. E. Smith for the Welsh Disestablishment Bill. The best poetry of Chesterton consists of the road-songs and drinking-songs scattered though the novel *The Flying Inn*. They show a rare combination of wisdom and nonsense, humour and high spirits and with *The Donkey* constitute his finest poetic contribution.

If a prediction may be ventured, Chesterton will be remembered longest by his poems and his work in literary criticism.

Substance of the Poem.—G. K. Chesterton has made the battle of Lepanto, 1571, the subject of this

poem. The Sultan of Turkey was jubilant because he is at the height of his power and his navy has proved a terror to the Italian ports. Even Venice the greatest republic on the coast was afraid of the Turkish ships. The Pope in his despair appealed to the Christian powers and combine to drive away from the European waters the common enemy of Christianity. But his appeal was not responded to enthusiastically. Elizabeth of England was unconcerned, the French king was not enthused. Then the European powers were not on good terms and this made an alliance all the more difficult. The Sultan knew these conditions and was taking the fullest advantage of the weakness of the Christian nations.

Only one important person, Don John of Austria was stirred by the appeal of the Pope. He had no kingdom and no crown on his head, yet he resolved to do all that he could to repulse the Turks. After a long time a crusade was again organized by him and he could secure the help of Spain, Austria and the Venetian Republic. He had already made himself famous by driving away the moors from Spain and by giving them a crushing blow in their own land. He marched in triumph at the head of a big army.

The preparations of Don John caused a flutter in Paradise where Mahomed was disturbed in his pleasures. He summoned his giants and genii to gather together. They came from all sorts of places. From the skies, bottom of the sea, craters of volcanoes and even from hell. He commanded them to go and crush the Christian powers who were raising their heads again as they had done before during the crusades. Mahomed said that everything was ordained wisely by God and there should be no malcontents. And if there were any they should be crushed. Those

who did not believe in 'Kismet' were infidels and should be treated as such.

In the meanwhile Don John's army was marching forward and his cause was also watched by the protector of the crusades, St. Michael. But the Christian countries did not respond to his call to arms. The differences between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics were very acute. The Christian virtues were entirely absent from those who professed to love their religion. Christianity was made an engine of oppression by the Roman Catholics who had established the Inquisition. The extreme Protestants were so intolerant that they would not allow 'worship of Mary in their churches. All these unfortunate facts were responsible for acute differences and bitterness among the Christian nations. But Don John was undaunted and he marched on.

The Pope was constantly praying in his closet before the day of engagement. He prayed for the success of Don John and the defeat of the Turks. He imagined to himself the merciless bombardment of Venice, its palaces and churches by the Turkish ships and was afraid to think of the consequences which would follow in case Don John was beaten. He thought of the innumerable Christian captives in the holds of the Turkish ships. Their lot was worse than that of toiling slaves or miners working underground. In their helpless condition they had lost faith in God and never dreamt of their deliverance. The Turkish Chiefs gave them a treatment which no civilized people would think of today.

Luckily for them Don John scattered the Turkish fleet and liberated the Christians from their captivity. They were exultant and thanked God and their deliverer.

Don John returned to Spain triumphant but he did not know what fate awaited him there as his half-brother Philip, King of Spain, had plotted his death by poisoning him. Cervantes also fought at Lepanto and lost his arm while returning home in Spain he resolved to give up the profession of arms and take to literature. Possibly he conceived the plot of Don Quixote while returning home, and then gave the world his famous work.

Remarks on the Poem.—G. K. Chesterton has chosen here an important event in the history of Europe and Christendom. The difficulty of treating a battle in verse to avoid unnecessary details and yet create a sense of horror, animation and suspense. It becomes really difficult to find things to say when the actual warfare is not to be taken up in detail. History comes to rescue from this difficulty. The poet has drawn a nice picture of the elated Sultan and his prowess. The most interesting portion of the poem, however, is the poet's description, though brief yet highly suggestive, of the divisions among the Christian powers and the cruel treatment accorded by the Roman Catholics and the Protestants to one another. This dark portion in the history of Christianity with the causes which led to such conditions have been set forth in a truly poetic manner. Such details usually are dry and a poet must be excused if he shows them. Chesterton mentions them suggesting details and maintaining historical accuracy.

It is not without a touch of humour that Mahommed is introduced. His is a comical figure making him ridiculous not merely by the result of the battle but because of his undoubted faith in the superiority of his religion and surety of victory over Christians. The poet has left it to the imagination of the reader as to what happened to Mahommed after the battle was

over and the Turks were routed. Did he reconcile himself to his 'Kismet' and the Fates turned his own argument against him ?

There is no full length portrait of Don John attempted in the poem. But there are references clear enough to show his determination, enthusiasm for religion and high qualities of generalship. The dramatic event of liberating the Christian captives is 'powerfully described' as is their pitiable condition in the holds of the Turkish ships. Philip with his phial of poison shows his intriguing and unscrupulous character. But next Don John's personality that lingers in our memory is that of Cervantes though only a passing reference is made. *Don Qixote* is the gift of Lepanto. If Cervantes had not lost his arm he would not have turned to literature.

It has been remarked that G. K. Chesterton is a man of striking personality, but he is not able to transfer his personality to his poetry, which bears none of the distinction of his prose. In this poem also we miss the compelling interest of the narrative, though there are stirring passages. The actual engagement is described only in three or four lines but it is full of animation and is quite vivid.

The poem is not quite easy but it can be read with a sustained interest.

LEPANTO

Notes.

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Lepanto—It is a sea port of Aetolia, in Greece on the gulf of the same name. The Battle of Lepanto fought on Oct. 7, 1571, was the last notable event in the centuries of the crusades. The battle was fought

at sea near Naupaktus of classical history, an important naval base in the Pelopounecian War, Don John of Austria, half-brother of Phillip II of Spain commanded the allied fleets of Spain, Venice and the Papal states. The Turkish fleet under Ali Pasha was completely destroyed, more than 100 vessels falling into Don John's hands, while the Christian losses were comparatively light. It was signal success of this exploit that fired Don John to carve out a kingdom for himself, since he was a crownless prince "risen from a doubtful seat and half attained stall."

Lines 1—6. White founts—fountains throwing out crystal clear water. **Courts of the sun**—the palaces of the Sultan where the sun shines brightly. **Soldan of Byzantium**—the Sultan of Turkey. Byzantium is another name of Constantinople, at one time the capital of Turkey. Now the capital is removed to Angora and Constantinople has changed its name to Istambul. **Smiling as they ran**—enjoying the sight of fountains. **Laughter fountains**—just as the fountains are playing freely so the Sultan is also laughing happily and without restraint. **That face feared**—the Sultan of whom all were afraid. **The forest darkness**—the luxuriant black beard of the Sultan is compared to a forest. **Crescent**—the curved form, especially of the moon. **The inmost sea earth**—the Mediterranean sea, all Christian countries round which had been harried by the Turkish fleets.

Explanation. The Sultan of Turkey is at the height of his power. His ships go freely in all parts of the Mediterranean sea, and his naval power is supreme there. He is enjoying the sight of playing fountains in his courts where the sun is shining brightly. He himself is in a pleasant mood. His beard thick like a dense forest shakes with his laugh-

ter and his curved red lip, also moves. He is so mighty that people are afraid of him.

Lines 7—10. They have.....Italy—the Turkish naval power has challenged and fought the republican states of Italy. **Republics**—of Venice, Este and Romagnel. **Dashed the Adriatic**—they have forcibly made their way in the Adriatic sea, on the east coast of Italy. **Round the Lion of the Sea**—surrounding Venice, which at one time was a great sea power. The city has St. Mark as its patron saint, carried the lion-symbolic of the second evangelist on its banner. **Pope has**..... **abroad**—Pope has asked other Christian powers to help Venice and Italy against the Turks. **The cross**—the symbol of Christianity; here Christianity itself.

Explanation. The Turkish fleet has made inroads upon the republican states of Italy and has pushed through the Adriatic sea to the gates of Venice, the greatest power on that sea coast. The Pope in his despair and difficulty has appealed to all the Christian powers to combine together, for the protection of Christianity, against the Turks.

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Lines 13—14. The cold.....England—Queen Elizabeth. **Is looking**.....**glass**—she is apparently unperturbed by the growth of the Turkish power and its inroads on Italy. **The shadow of the Valois**—‘the house of Valois ruled France from 1328 to 1589. By “the shadow of Valois” is meant the then reigning French King, Charles IX, who had none of the religious faith or conquering energy of his predecessors.’ **Is yawning**—indicating his indifference to religion and therefore his unconcern at the Turkish invasions on Italy, though he himself was a Roman Catholic. **Mass**—the celebration of the

Lord's supperor Eucharist in Roman Catholic Churches. **Even isles**—the West Indies which were Spanish possessions. **Fantastical**—wild. The native inhabitants of the West Indies were uncivilized and were in many ways quite different from the European countries. **Rings faint**—the booming of the guns is heard faintly. **The Spanish gun**—the battle-ships of Spain. **From evening isles** **gun**—the Sultan knows that many of the Spanish battle-ships are in the West Indies far away from the European waters and they cannot easily be brought back to oppose him. And so he is not much afraid of the Spanish power. **The Lord**—the Sultan. **The Golden Horn**—the harbour of Constantinople, a curved arm of the Bosphorus sea. **Is laughing in the sun**—Is happy and cheerful realizing his secure position.

Explanation. The appeal of the Pope to the Christian powers of Europe to combine against the Turks in order to drive them out of Europe is not likely to be responded to enthusiastically by the different nations. Queen Elizabeth of England, herself a Protestant, remains unconcerned. The French King lacks the religious zeal and conquering energy of his predecessors. He not doubt belongs to the famous house of Valois yet he lacks the characteristic traits of his ancestors. The Spanish navy is in the distant and wild islands of the West Indies and it can easily be called there to fight the Turks in the European waters. The Sultan knows these political conditions to his advantage and is happy in his security.

Lines 15—20. In the hills half-heard—the sound of the drums was only half-heard, most probably because Don John had no kingdom to rule. **Nameless throne a crownless prince**—Don John. Natural

son of the Emperor Charles V and half-brother of Phillip II of Spain. He was a brilliant but ruthless soldier. He crushed the Moors of Granada in 1570. Still greater victory awaited him at Lepanto the next year. He occupied no throne and ruled no kingdom. **Has stirred**—has responded to the call of the Pope. **Risen from a doubtful seat and half attained stall**—the reference is to the illegitimate birth of Don John and his doubtful claim to a throne. **The last knight of Europe**—with the passing away of the middle Ages the knights had also gone and with them the ready response to fight for religion. Don John is called the last knight. **Troubadour**—one of a class of poets of chivalric love, who first in Provence, in France, and flourished from the 11th to the 13th century. **The last and sung**—Don John has been called the last knight of Europe and now he is called the last troubadour, because a knight combined chivalry and gallantry. **To whom the bird has sung**—who has received inspiration as love poets did from the songs of birds. **When the world was young**—in the remote past.

Explanation. The appeal of the Pope stirred only one person who having no throne and no kingdom of his own and though belonging to a great house was himself of illegitimate birth. He may be called the last of the knights of Europe who reminded us of the days of chivalry and gallantry. It was he alone who prepared himself to fight the Turks.

Lines 21—35. In that enormous silence—when the whole of Europe did not stir to fight the Turks. **Tiny and unafraid**—though without a big army he was undaunted. **Comes up crusade**—a small army is coming to fight against the Turks, for the protection of Christianity. **The crusade**—crusade were military expeditions taken by some of the

Christian nations of Europe with the object of wresting Jerusalem from the Mohammedans. Peter the Hermit started the agitation in 1009 and from that date to 1271 various crusades were undertaken. There were eight crusades in all. **Gongs groaning**—bells and other metallic instruments were rung to enlist persons to take part in the crusade. **The guns boom far**—while battles are going on in distant places. **Don John of Austria**—see note above. **Stiff flags**—because they had not been taken out on crusades for a long time. **Black-purple**—the colours of the banners. **Glint**—gleam; shine. **Tuckets**—a kind of trumpet. **Brave beard**—the beard curled in a manner as to show his courage. The Sultan's beard has been compared to a dark forest. **Spurning of his world**—as a commander on horse back he looks like the lord of the world. He moves his feet in the stirrups as if he was kicking the thrones of Europe. **Holding his head free**—he holds his head high promising protection to those who wanted freedom from the oppression of the Turks. His head is like a banner, as under his command all can join to chastise the Turks. **Love-light of Spain—hurrah! Death-light of Africa**—Don John is greeted by the people while marching to the crusades. He is a friend and ally of Spain, being half-brother of Phillip II and the devastator of the Moors in Africa.

Explanation. Don John marches to the sea though he has no kingdom, no realm and no large standing army. We hear his men marching in a proper procession with banners of different colours, kettle drums, tuckets and trumpets. Then in the order of the procession come cannons and behind them he rides looking an imposing figure as if he were the lord of the whole world. People are called

to join his men and fight for their freedom under his command. On his march he is hailed as the friend and ally of Spain and the destroyer of the Moors in Africa.

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Lines 36—47. Mahound—an old form of the name of Mohammed. In the Middle Ages Mohammed was often vaguely imagined to be worshipped as a god and his name was used as synonymous with a false prophet or an evil spirit. **Above the evening star**—the heaven of the Mohammedans is higher than the sky or the planets we see. **Don John** **war**—the poet desires the reader to see both the pictures at once the one in the heaven and the other in this world. **He moves a mighty** **houri's knee**—he is lying reclining on the knee of a houri and just moves his head on which there is a large turban. **Houri**—one of the seventy-two nymphs assigned to every one of the faithful in the Mohammedan paradise. She is called 'timeless' as her youth is eternal. **Woven of the sunset and the seas**—the fabric is of exquisitely beautiful colours. **He shakes** **Peacock gardens**—gardens where peacocks are kept or live. **Strides among the tree-tops** **trees**—when he walks he has to tread over trees which are smaller in size than himself. **Black Azrael** **wing**—he loudly commands that these three angles be at once brought to his presence. 'Azrael, according to Jewish and Mohammedan legend, is the angel of death who separates the soul from the body. Ariel is a water-spirit in ancient and mediæval demonology. Ammon was originally one of the chief gods of Egypt. All these spirits are here regarded as angels subject to the power of Mohamed in Paradise.

Giants and the genii **eye**—they were

giants and evil spirits having many wings and many eyes. **Whose strong king**—the reference seems to Solomon's change of religion in his old age. "For it came to pass, when Solomen was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father." See Bible 1, Kings Chap. 11. Solomon was a great and wealthy king of Israel, son of David and Bathshelea, famous as the builder of the temple and for his wisdom. He is credited in oriental legend with power over the jinn. He was seduced from the true path by Ammon and others.

Explanation. The preparations of Don John cause a flutter in Paradise where Mohammed's peace of mind is disturbed. He rises up with his big imposing many coloured turban on his head from the knees of a houri on which he was reclining. He goes out in his garden where his tall figure rises above the trees. There he calls loudly in a thunderous voice three of his evil spirits of giantic proportions and having many eyes and wings. These wicked spirits were the same who once before had beguiled king Solomon and had turned him against his Lord.

Lines 48—59. They—giants and genii. **Red and purple**—colours of their garments. **The freedom scorn**—idols of gold sit with closed eyes caring least for whatever may be happening in the world. **Fallen skies**—the sky reflected in the sea of bell. **Sea-valves**—there is no particular object called 'sea-valves'. The poet perhaps means bubbles on the surface of the sea through which the air escapes. **Sea-forests**—there is vegetation at the bottom of the sea. **Splendid sickness**—the giants and genii coming up from the bottom of the sea have pearls clung to

their bodies, and they appear like eruptions on the skin.

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They swell—become ponderous. **In sapphire smoke** **ground**—blue coloured smoke which comes out of volcanoes. **They gather**—having been summoned by Azrael, Ariel and Ammon they come from all parts of the world and heaven above and together meet Mahound. **Break of** **hide**—the Christian hermits living in inaccessible places must be driven out and their places destroyed. **Sift the red** **abide**—shrines and graves of saints and their relics must all be destroyed making their worship by Christians impossible. **Giaours**—infidels. A term applied by the Turks to all, specially Christians, who are not of their own religion. It is the Turkish word for 'Kafir'. **That which was** **west**—the Western countries of Europe, specially Spain, are again rising against the Turkish power and Moslem religion. A crusade is again being organized.

Explanation. When Azrael, Ariel and Ammon were called by Mahound, they in their turn ordered giants and genii to assemble from all parts of the earth and sky. They all came at once from the east, from temples where golden images are worshipped; they also came from the bottom of the seas where eyeless creatures live and the spies are reflected on the surface; these genii, from the hells of sea were covered with vegetation growing under water and had bubbles all over their bodies; and the pearls on their bodies looked like eruptions on the skin. They also came from under the volcanoes with their swollen bodies. All of them gathered in the presence of Mahound and paid their homage to him. He commanded them to break up the monasteries of

Christian hermits built by them on mountain tops and other secluded and safe places. He ordered them to pull down shrines of Christian saints and destroy their relics and to hunt away infidels from all parts of the world. He told them that the old menace to Islam was raising its head up and a crusade was being organized the Turkish people and their religion. Thus Mahound sent an organized force of giants and genii to fight against the Christians who were marching under Don John of Austria

Lines 60—73. Set the seal of Solomon—the reference is to Solomon's prayer asking God for wisdom. "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad : for who is able to judge this thy so great a people". See the Bible, 1 Kings, Chap. 3, 5-14. **We have set the seal sun**—everything in the world has been wisely planned and no change or reform is necessary. According to Mahound things were in a perfect state and so the crusade against Moslems was a disturbance to divine ordinance. **Of knowledge of sorrow things done**—it is according to a divine an unalterable scheme that some people are wise and others ignorant; some are happy and others have to suffer. **But a noise I know**—there is some disturbance and infidels are rising. **The voice that ago**—just as the crusades were organized by Christian powers against Islam four hundred years ago, so a similar movement is on foot again. **It is he that not fate**—the Christian crusader does not believe in pre-ordained destiny or unalterable fate. He believes in action and its results. As compared to Christianity, says the poet, Moslems have a stronger faith in pre-ordained destiny as laid down by divine power which man can never alter. **Kismet**—the Mohammedan

name for Fate, or the incidents and details of a man's lot in life. The word is Turkish, coming from an Arabic word meaning 'to divide'. **Richard**—Richard I of England who ruled from 1189 to 1199. He laid heavy burdens upon the people in order to equip an army for the third crusade. For his valour he received the name of "Coeur de Lion". Ultimately he was forced to sign a truce with Saladin. **Raymond and Godfrey**—they belonged to the famous Norman house of Hauteville and were mighty crusaders of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries against the Mohammedans for the recovery of the Holy Land for the Christians. **In the gate**—the Christian forces are approaching fast. **It is hewager worth**—Don John of Austria is a man who would not sacrifice too great for the achievement of his object, once he is resolved upon something. **Put down theirhim**—crush Don John and his rising against the Moslem power. **That our peaceearth**—so that peace may prevail upon earth among the moslems. **For he heardjar**—because Mahound heard the sound of the marching drums of Don John and the booming of his guns disturbed Mahound's peace in heaven. **Don Johnwar**—the poet wants us to follow the progress of Don John's army while Mahound is anxious in heaven.

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Sudden and still—hurrah—at intervals there are jubilant cries of the marching soldiers and the people who watch them. **Bolt from Iberia**—the Turks are sure to receive a heavy blow from the Spanish army. **Iberia**—the name given to Spain by the Greeks, and to territories north of Spain and Portugal. **Is gone by Alcálar**—has gone to fight the Turks by the city of Alcalar, in Spain. No less than thirteen towns in Spain were known by this name.

Explanation. These lines give us the speech of Mahound to the assembled giants and genii. He exhorts them to go and crush Don John and his forces marching against the Turks. Mahound says that everything on earth has been pre-ordained by divine wisdom. It is not to be questioned why some are wise, happy and some are ignorant and miserable. Yet there are some malcontents in the world who are leading an army against the Turks and seem to question the divine arrangement. The noise of their rising is heard even in heaven and it is the same movement which was inaugurated against the Turks four hundred years ago by the Crusaders like Richard I, Raymond and Godfrey. These people do not believe in an alterable fate of men as unalterably fixed by God. They trust their efforts and depend upon their prowess to make things better for themselves. Then one of them Don John is a man of determination. He considers no sacrifice too great to achieve the object on which he lays his heart. The giants and genii are ordered to go and crush Don John and his forces so that the Turks may live in peace upon earth. In another scene we find Don John continuing his march while his soldiers and the people are excited with joy and enthusiastically acclaim victory for Spain and hope to give a crushing defeat to the Turks.

Lines 74—91. St. Michael's on his Mountain— Mont St. Michael, near St. Melo in Brittany. St. Michael was the Archangel whose special duty was the defence of Christ; therefore he was of special importance to crusaders. **The sea-roads of the north—** Mt. St. Michael is by the sea-side in Brittany, a north west province of France. **Is girt—**is equipped and dressed. **Where the grey shift—**the sea-coast of Brittany in France. **Lift—**rise. **He shakes**

his..... **stone**—this is the picture of St. Michael who is helping the cause of the crusaders just as Mahound is exciting the giants and genii.

Claps..... **stone**—the idea of Mount is continued. **The noise**..... **Normandy**—another province of France. Normandy also hears the report of Don John's response to the appeal of the Pope. **The noise is gone alone**—but the people of Normandy do not feel any enthusiasm to join Don John against the Turks. **The North is full of tangled things**—people in the north are divided among themselves and religious differences are acute there. **Texts and aching eyes**—the Catholics and Protestants are hopelessly divided and the turmoil of sects, difference in the interpretation of religious texts, the Reformation and counter movements—all these have made it impossible for the people to make a common cause for Christianity against the Turks. **Aching eyes**—because studying religious texts minutely to uphold one's own views and to controvert those of the opponents. **And dead**..... **surprise**—the Christian ideal of brotherhood and kindness is forgotten and instead hatred, anger and sudden and quick action obtain. **And Christian killed**..... **room**—refers to the murder of Duke of Guise at Blois in 1563. **And Christian dreadeth**..... **doom**—this line refers to the Inquisition and its terrors. The Inquisition was a Roman Catholic ecclesiastical court which became a formidable weapon in the thirteenth century in dealing with charges of heresy. **Newer face of doom**—the Inquisition is like the doom on earth. **And Christian hateth**..... **Galilee**—the Roman Catholic Church worships Mary the virgin mother of Christ and this line quotes the authority for this ; but the extreme Protestants do not worship Mary and other Christian saints and martyrs. See Bible, St. Luke. Chap. 1, 26-31—"And the

angel came in unto her, and said, Hail thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee ; blessed art thou among women." **Galilee**—a division of Palestine. **But Don John**..... **sea**—if the northern Christian countries do not heed the Pope's appeal to drive out the Turks and they are divided by religious differences, Don John must go on his mission. Whether he receives the help of these countries or not he must face the common enemy. **Calling through the blast and eclipse**—whatever may befall. He knows that the Christian power is under a cloud for the present. **Crying with the trumpet**—he is loudly inviting all to join hands. Trumpet that saith. **Domino Gloria**—this is Don John's rallying cry—'Glory to Lord.' **Is shouting to the ships**—he is ready to embark.

Explanation. If Mahound is busy in heaven organizing his forces to combat Don John, saint Michael is not negligent in protecting the crusaders. In Brittany he is busy inspiring men to fight against the moslem aggression. But in the immediate north of Brittany, Normandy is not enthused over the call to arms which Don John has proclaimed throughout the whole of Christendom. The northern countries, though followers of Christianity, are hopelessly divided and quarrel among themselves. They wrangle about scriptures and their correct interpretations and employ themselves in assiduously studying them to raise hot controversies. The Christian spirit of meekness and forgiveness is entirely absent from their daily relations. Even murders are committed in the name of religion and the Inquisition mercilessly inflicts brutal punishments, upon those who deviate in the least from the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church. Protestants will not tolerate homage and worship of Mary, though God meant his

believer to do so. Though there is not much response to the appeal of the Pope, Don John is marching forward courageously. He has loudly proclaimed his mission and is pursuing it come what may. His battle rallying cry is 'Glory to God' and he is soon to embark to meet the Turkish fleet.

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Lines 92—107. King Philip's in his closet—Philip II of Spain (1527—1598), the half brother of Don John of Austria, does not stir out in response to the Pope's appeal for help. **With the Fleece about his neck**—the highest decoration and honour and the gift of the King of Spain was the order of the Golden Fleece. Golden Fleece, in Greek mythology, is the fleece of the ram Chrysomallus, the recovery of which was the object of the famous expedition of the Argonauts. It gave its name to a celebrated order of knighthood in Austria and Spain. Philip of Spain is not ashamed of this decoration on his person while remaining personally unconcerned at the appeal of the Pope. **Don John is deck**—it is a contrasting picture. **The walls**—of Philip's chamber. **Velvet sin**—which may be taken as the symbol of the king's life. **Little dwarfs**—Philip has surrounded himself with pleasure-seekers and not with men of military ambitions. **He holds** **..moon**—he has a phial in his hand which contains a poisonous substance of yellowish white colour. **Tingles**—he feels a thrilling sensation. **He trembles very soon**—an idea strikes his mind which makes him nervous. **Fungus of a leprous white and grey**—soft and spongy like mushroom with the colour of a leper's skin. **Like plants day**—the colour of his face was not quite natural. Just as plants deprived of sunlight lose their natural colour and look dull so was the face of Philip. **And death is**

work—Philip is plotting to poison Don John after he had crushed the Turkish power. This is how he desires to express his gratefulness to his half-brother. He poisoned many of his opponents and even Don John. **Has fired upon the Turk**—the first engagement has already taken place with the Turks and he does not know what Philip is plotting against him. **Don John's hunting bayed**—like a hunter he goes to the field and receives fullest cooperation and willing obedience from the combined fleets of Spain, Venice and Austria. **Booms away raid**—his renown for successfully attacking the Turks spreads in all countries. **Has loosed the cannonade**—has ceaselessly bombarded the foe.

explanation. While Don John is himself proceeding with his army to repulse the Turks, Philip the King of Spain is living his sinful and merry life at his court. He may be proud of his highest decoration of the Golden Fleece but he is not seriously concerned with the fate of Don John. The king is anxious to employ him for his purpose and then to get rid of him. Don John is proceeding on his mission, has had first encounter with the Turks. His first success is resounding all over Europe and his ceaseless bombarding has proved disconcerting to his enemies. But in Spain, Philip is plotting to do short work with him on his return after crushing the Turks. The King is going to show his gratefulness by poisoning him. The poet represents as a person who likes to surround himself with mean persons and he himself holds a phial of poison and is thinking out the shortest way to dispose off Don John. An idea strikes him and his leprous face indicates it. He will poison Don John.

Lines 108—121. The Pope chapel—praying to God for the victory of Don John. **Don**

John **smoke**—there is hot work on the the front. **The hidden room** **year**—the Pope looking out from a window of his chapel sees the world and it looks small and insignificant as compared to those regions of heaven which are promised by to a truly religious man. But he loves the world and very dearly too. **He sees as in a mirror**—the scene of the naval battle is not actually before his eyes but he imagines what may be happening. **Monstrous twilight sea**—on account of the battle-ship engaged in action the sight looks terrible. **The crescent of** **mystery**—the Turkish fleet arranged in a semi-circle. The names of ships being in Turkish they cannot be read and seem to be mysterious. **They** **forwards**—the huge Turkish ship raise clouds of smoke by their heavy cannonade and strike terror in the hearts of Christians who find their religion, freedom and prosperity in great danger. They are afraid of the mighty Turkish fleet the victory of which would endanger their religion and its head.

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They veil—the smoke of their guns envelop in darkness. **Plumed lions**—the figures of lions having plumes on their bodies which were carved or painted on ships. This figure signified the greatness of Venice when it was a great sea-power. **The galleys of St. Mark**—the Venetian fleet. 'St. Mark' is the world famous church of Venice, built in honour of the protecting saint of the city. **And above the ships**—on upper decks of the Turkish ships. **Palaces** **chiefs**—Turkish chiefs occupy the comfortable rooms on decks. **Below the ships**—in the holds. **With multitudinous griefs**—countless sufferings and afflictions. **Sunless**—never allowed to come on the decks of ship. **All a** **repines**—Christians are

treated like slaves and they grumble at their lot. **Like a race** **cities**—like poor people buried under a destroyed city. **Like a nation** **mines**—workers in a mine, labouring underground. **Sweat**—toil and suffer penalties. **In the skies** **was young**—the Turks are like tall gods because they were the most powerful nation upon earth at that time. They live so high in their palaces on the decks of ships keeping the Christian captives in the dungeons of holds of ships. They are like gods for whom staircases are furnished by the bodies of their slaves. Such tyranny was found in ancient times only when people did not give a civilized treatment to their enemies.

Explanation. A day before the battle of Lepanto the Pope was praying constantly in his secluded chapel for the victory of Don John. From his window he looked upon the world which looked small yet was dear to him. He imagined the scene of battle and the terrible sight of the Turkish ships arranged in a semi-circle and firing their shots on the enemy and enveloping the churches and palaces of Venice by the clouds of smoke. The Pope in his fear also imagined the patron saint of Venice and the symbol of plumed Lion on the Venetian ships covered with smoke by the heavy cannonade of the Turkish fleet. In the fleet he saw countless poor Christian captives who were kept in the dark dungeons of the holds of ships living the miserable life of slaves or miners and who were not allowed to come up to the deck. Their cruel masters lived on decks and occupied comfortable rooms. These Turkish chiefs, so powerful in those days, were like gods and the Christian captives were their slaves. These slaves served like staircases for their masters to rise. Such cruelty was known only when the world was uncivilized.

Lines 122—137. Before the kings.....**Babylon**—the reference is here made to the shocking disproportion found in Babylonian rock-carvings as records of historical events in which subjects or conquered people were treated worse than slaves by their powerful kings. **Babylon**—the ancient capital of the Assyrian Empire in the Euphrates valley, about sixty miles south of Bagdad. A portion of its site is now occupied by Hilla. **Grows witless.....****hell**—many Christian prisoners in those holds of ships become mad. **Yellow face**—emaciated prisoner. **Looks inward.....****cell**—can now and then peep out of the lattices of the windows of his cell but cannot see the outer world. Only the dark and closed parts of the ship can be seen from these. **Inward**—the inner and darker parts of the ship. **And he.....****forgotten**—he forgets that there is a god to whom he should pray. **Seeks no more a sign**—his faith in God is gradually lost and in his hopelessness he asks for no sign of mercy from above. **Burst the battle-line**—has pierced the cordon of the Turkish ships and has scattered them. **Pounding**—shelling. **Slaughter-painted poop**—the hinder part of his ship which had become red with blood. **Purpling**—sailing with a murmuring sound. **Sloop**—a light boat. **Purpling all.....sloop**—Don John quickly sailed from one part of the sea to another like a pirate in his small boat. **Scarlet**—red colour of the blood. **Silver and the golds**—the colours on the surface of the sea—silver on the crest of the waves and furrows made by ship's and gold of the twilight sky. **Hatches**—opening in a ships deck into the hold. **Bursting of the holds**—the Christian captives being released from the holds, **Up**—on the decks.

That labour under sea—the Christian prisoners who had to work in the holds. The holds are below

the surface of water. **White for bliss**—sudden release from captivity made the emaciated prisoners so happy that their faces turned white. **Blind for sun**—their eyes were dazzled in light because they had long been kept in darkness. **Stunned for liberty**—they were amazed to find themselves free again and this they had never dreamt of. **Vivat Hispania**—long live Spain. Hispania comes from 'Span' meaning a rabbit. The land was so called because a vast number of rabbits were found there when the Carthepians came to the peninsula. **Domino Gloria**—glory to Lord.

Explanation. The condition of the countless Christian captives kept in the ships of the Turks was simply pitiable. They were no better than the slaves or subject people of Babylon cruelly treated by their powerful kings as we learn from rock-carvings. They had lost all hopes of rescue and some of them went mad in their captivity. Their faith in God was also disappearing and they never prayed for his mercy nor ever to win it. If they peeped out of the windows they could see only the inner and darker parts of the ship. But fortunately for them Don John was completing his victory. He broke the cordon of the Turkish ship. His ship was red with blood and it moved quickly from one place to another like a small ship of a pirate. Don John broke open the way leading to holds and liberated the captives who after a long time could come up to the decks which they now crowded. Their ecstacy turned them white and their eyes were dazzled by light as they had become unaccustomed to it. They were beside with joy at their liberation, and with an outburst grateful feelings for their liberator they shouted—"Long live Spain—Glory to Lord".

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Lines 138—143. **Cervantes**—(1537—1616) the

celebrated author of 'Don Quixote'. He had a most adventurous career taking part in many military expeditions, and not turning to literature until his retirement from the profession of arms. His work is famous throughout the world but he died in poverty. **Cervantes sheath**—Cervantes was one of the persons who joined the battle. When the victory was complete he sheathed his sword on his vessel. He lost an arm in the battle of Lepanto. **With a wreath**—honoured for his victory. **He**—Cervantes. **Sees**—in his imagination. **Across a weary Spain**—he saw in his country a harassed land through which a road was running beyond its proper limits. **Up which vain**—he imagines the picture of Don Quixote, a knight errant extravagantly romantic and aiming at impossible ideals. **And he smiles**—because of the happy idea of writing a romance with such a knight errant as its hero, and thus laugh away the chivalry of Spain. **But not as Sultans smile**—Cervantes' laughter was due to quite different reasons. The Sultan was happy because he was a mighty person and his ships shook 'the inmost sea of all the earths'; whereas Cervantes was happy because he would be creating an immortal character and himself give up the profession of arms. **Settles back the blade**—he will no more join military expeditions and would turn to literature.

Explanation. In this famous battle Cervantes also took part and he lost his one arm also. After the victory he sheathed his sword never to take it out again. He left the profession of arms and turned to literature. Perhaps on his way home he realized the picture of the knight-errant whom he was to immortalize in his famous work, as a person of impossible ideals and by this creation to rock the whole world with laughter and for all time. Cervantes conceived

the idea at a happy time. The Sultan had been happy at his prowess and victories and Cervantes was happy for turning to literature and intending to give an immortal work to the world. The Sultan's smile was gone and he was humbled, Don John returned home victorious in the last crusade, though now without an arm, came with an enriched imagination and an idea which entitled him to be remembered for all time.

GORDON BOTTOMLEY.

17. THE END OF THE WORLD.

Life and Work.—Gordon Bottomley, English poet and dramatist was born on Feb. 20, 1874, at Keighley a small manufacturing town in the commercial district of West Riding of Yorkshire. He was educated at the Keighley Grammar School, but did not proceed to a university. R. L. Megroz describes him as a man of 'passionate energy, whose eyes, grey and stormy look at you from a face almost haggard with past suffering'. Since the age of nineteen he has not known good health. Most of his work has been done at his home at Silverdale, near Cornforth, on the Lancashire coast.

Completely absorbed in poetic work, and in studying the Elizabethan dramatists and poets from whom he draws inspiration, his life has been uneventful. He is extremely indifferent to popular attention and his works have been issued in such a way as to limit his audience.

In his poetic dramas, Bottomley has dared to invite comparison with Shakespeare by treating Shakespearean and Elizabethan themes. *King Lear's Wife* he gave an original conception of Lear before the beginning of Shakespeare's play when it was produced at the Festival Theatre, in Cambridge, before a highly critical audience. it was one of the successes of the season of 1926. Bottomley approached another Shakespearean theme in *Gruach*, a portrait of Lady Macbeth at her first meeting with her future husband. The play had a favourable reception and was awarded the Femina-Vie Heurense Prize in 1923.

In 1905 Bottomley was married to Emily Burton. In 1925 he was awarded the Arthur Benson Medal of the Royal Society of Literature and in the following year he was elected to a fellowship in the Society. In 1930 he was made an honorary LL.D. of the University of Durham.

In a letter to Drinkwater, Gosse describes a visit to Bottomley and gives an interesting insight into his character. "He lives very remotely, out of sight of a house, in a kind of labyrinth of overgrown foliage, barbed wise with huge wild-rose bushes like a sleeping beauty. When you arrive at the very summit of the maze, a neat and ingenious little house, as smart as a new little firm, is suddenly discovered, and the Bearded Bard with his charming little wife—all antelope eyes and snow-white hair—are smiling at you from the porch. He is unlike any other human being I have ever known. He has a golden heart, simple, large and loving".

His poems include. *The Mickle Dred* (1896); *Poems at White Night* (1899); *The Gate of Smaragdus* (1904); *Chambers of Imagery* (1907); *A vision of Georgione*; *Three Variations on Venetian Themes* (1910); *Poems of Thirty Years* (1925); *Festival Preludes* (1930). His poetic dramas are—*The Crier by night* (1902); *Midsummer Eve* (1905); *The Riding to Lithend* (1909); *Laodice and Danae* (1909); *King Lear's Wife* (1915); *Gruach and Britain's Daughter* (1921); and *Scenes and Plays* (1929).

As a Poet.—As Lascelles Abercrombie says "It has now become clear that at no time in the history of English poetry since the seventeenth century has the requisite combination of dramatic and poetic talents existed until now in the person of Mr. Bottomley". He is one of those small band of poets whose dramatic sense is so keen that he has overcome all obstacles

and produced in the present day verse-dramas that are comparable to the best work of the Elizabethans. His genius has laid the foundations of a new technique of the poetic drama, a technique in the modern spirit, one that will lead to the revival of the form and a new era of poetic drama. This combination of the two elements—the poetic and dramatic—is partly temperamental and arises partly out of a study of Shakespeare and other Elizabethan poets and dramatists.

Milton Bronner, author of a short study of Bottomley, sees him as a poet of three moods; a 'gray' mood for Iceland, a 'white' mood for England, and 'rose' mood for Italy. He shows that Bottomley's poetry easily falls into these groups, and on the basis of the moods he explains some of the difficulties that have troubled readers.

In his English or 'white' mood Bottomley appears as a lyric poet, in which form he is not so well-known as for his dramatic poetry. The verses that present him in his aspect are the two volumes of *Chambers of Imagery*. One of the most popular poems in this collection is 'Netted Strawberries'—a picture of rural England. Bottomley's one-act tragedies, *Riding to Lithend* and *The Crier of Night* are the illustrations of the 'gray' mood. The material for the former is found in the Icelandic sagas as of the heroic warriors Guinjar and Njal. Bottomley has added characters that do not appear in the sagas and has omitted that do.

The 'rose' mood shows Bottomley under the spell of Renaissance in Italy. In *A Vision of Giorgione* the famous Italian painter is portrayed in three important phases of his activity. The poet builds his picture with-complete freedom and brings to bear upon his task a highly sensitive imagination.

Remarks on the poem.—The revealed religions usually give their followers pictures of the end of the world. Some of them describe things in such horrid details as we find in case of hell. In this poem Bottomley gives a poetic description of the end as it may come. The first thing would be a snowfall so severe that it would appear as if the planetary movements had been disturbed by some mistake. Mountains would be reduced to heaps of ruins and trees would become uprooted. There would be no wind still dust-storms would pass over the earth as if by a sigh.

Gradually all animal life in the world would become extinct. Very few sounds of animals would be heard in the world. Stray barking of a dog, bleating of a strayed sheep or a limping fox may be seen. But that too for a short time. People would confine themselves in doors and would be surprised if they saw a human being outside, looking larger than his usual size on account of the falling snow. Birds would disappear and snow gathered up on leaves would fall down upon earth.

Every thing crusted with snow would present a strange appearance. The clock would stop for sheer cold and people sheltering indoors would forget the days of the week and fail to calculate time. Gradually cold would become more and more intense and the atmosphere and the sky would harden and crumble upon earth. The earth itself would lose its warmth and the sky would disappear. The sense of cold would be so intense that objects if touched would 'burn' hands.

People would be chilled to death and fire would not burn so as to keep them warm. Gripped with cold their hearts would cease to throb and they would appear in their chilled condition as if they were

sleeping. And thus the whole world would come to its end.

It has already been mentioned that Mr. Bottomley's poems may be regarded as the product of his three moods. *The End of the World* belongs to his English or 'gray' mood. Along with *Babel*, another poem, the present one may be regarded as experimental. The first tells how the power of speech came to be lost and so the poem ends in a riot of sound. *The End of the World* presents a gloomy picture of a cold earth with all forms of life being extinguished by constantly falling snow. The poet desired to draw a dismal dark picture and he has given us one which while reading, makes, as if, our blood freeze.

There are some beautiful lines which intensify the sense of chilliness and its gradually hardening death-grip on all objects animate as well as inanimate. The last lines give a dramatic touch to the passing away of two loving persons one after another. Death is mistaken for sleep which should not be disturbed. But she does not know that she herself has to fall in the same slumber from which there would be none left to disturb her.

THE END OF THE WORLD.

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Lines 1—5. The snow.....days—coldness is the sign of death. The poet begins his picture with a continuous snowfall. **The sky.....at last**—and it seemed by the continuous and heavy snowfall that the whole sky had poured down its contents and had practically come upon the earth. **Shifting thin-**

ly—the falling snow in flakes, is supposed to have passed slowly through a sieve. **As endlessly**—without any break. The poet gives some imaginary reason for the incessant fall. **As though overdriven**—just as a machine or engine sometimes works at a high and uncontrollable tension so the system of planets the heaven had gone wrong and is moving at an excessive speed. **System of blind planets**—the orderly motion of the planets over which the planets themselves have no control. **Something overdriven**—some part of the planetary machinery had been forgotten or was driven at a very high speed.

Explanation. For days and night snow had fallen ceaselessly as if it was passing through a sieve emptying the whole sky upon the earth. It seemed that the planetary system had gone out of order and that which controlled their proper movements in heaven was out of gear.

Lines 6—8. The dawn now grey—the sun did not rise to shine brightly. The gray colour of the sky remained without being dispelled by the rising sun. **Where mountains were unbuilt**—in the distant part of the horizon the mountains seemed to have been flung here and there or powdered down to the earth. The poet uses the word ‘unbuilt’ because he wants to convey the idea that like demolished buildings mountains were lying in an irregular heap. **Shadowless trees air**—the trees were uprooted and looked suspended in the air. As there was no sunshine so the trees did not cast their shadows upon the earth. **Rootlessly paused**—they were no more fixed in the ground and so looked suspended.

Explanation. The sun did not rise changing the gray colour of the morning into bright sunshine. The mountains seemed to have been demolished and lying in an irregular heap, and trees though uprooted

were standing in the air without casting any shadow upon the ground.

Lines 9—12. A sigh crossed.....dust--after the incessant snowfall, came down dust from the sky. Though there was no wind but the dust was driven by a sigh. **Sifted it.....casement**—the dust was carried inside the houses by that sigh through openings, roofs and windows.

Explanation. After the snowfall, came the dust from the sky. It seemed to be carried by a sigh and moaning sound but there was no wind. The dust came into the houses through windows openings and roofs. It was time that the new moon should have appeared in the sky but it did not, nor was it visible.

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Lines 13—17. **Outside**—if you went outside the house. **The first.....void**—at dawn it seemed that there was no living creature and so no sound. **And tenderness.....it**—the bleating of a sheep was heard which seemed to fill the whole place with a feeling of compassion. **But now.....away**—the sheep was separated from its flock which must have taken shelter somewhere leaving it far behind. **The lights across.....dusk**—it was not possible for the lost sheep to find its way back as it was growing dark and even the lights had become invisible and the rising smoke from chimneys too could not be discerned in darkness.

Explanation. There was absolute silence in the world outside. Only once the bleating of a lost sheep was heard and it filled the whole place with a pitiful cry. It was separated from the flock in the morning and now it was impossible for it to return to the fold or flock because of insufficient light and want of any sign to direct its path.

Lines 19—28. **Snow had roof**—the roof of the cow-shed had been covered by snow for more than three days. **Where it had inside**—the breath of the cattle warming up the ceiling would melt the snow outside leaving a yellow stain there. **Some one singing**—how could he be a human being to stir out on such an occasion and that too happily singing. **Yes**—undoubtedly some one was seen. **With locks morning**—just as the rays of the sun spread on all sides in the morning so his hair was hanging loose on his back and face. **Too tall to be a man**—perhaps he was not a man as he was so tall. **It was that unseen**—did he appear taller than he was because for such a long time no man had stirred out and the sight of man had become unfamiliar. **Or shapes snow**—or he looked bigger than he was because on account of snowfall things appear bigger in size. **And he was him**—that man would not have gone out but, perhaps, for the fact that no body gave him anything to eat.

Explanation. The snow had been falling for three days, but by this time would not melt away. Formerly when it snowed and the roof of the cow-shed was covered, the snow would melt away, by the hot breath of the cattle and flow away leaving yellow stains on the roof. But this time it did not melt. One solitary dog was heard barking there and that too some time back no man was visible outside. But once some one did appear going down the valley with his hair spread over his face like the rays of the sun. He could not be a man as he looked too tall. Either he was a man who had been turned out receiving no hospitality or food from anybody or he appeared larger than he actually was on account of this snowfall. It is possible that he looked bigger because

the sight of a man outside had become so uncommon and unfamiliar.

Lines 29—35. An overweighted leaf—leaf burdened with the snow depositing on it. **It might havewhirring wings**—it would seem that a bird had fallen from the tree while it was asleep and taking shelter there, making a whirring noise of wings by its fall. **Thus it seemed**—because it was gradually becoming difficult to support life. No body could be sure that any dog was yet left alive. **Lean foxno more**—that too fell a victim to the extreme cold.

Explanation. Snow gathering on leaves fell down on ground like a weight, as if it was a bird falling suddenly while asleep from its place of shelter making a fluttering sound. But no bird had yet fallen like that excepting once, and when it did fall it was completely covered with snow only in two days time. No barking of dogs was heard, excepting once when it barked at a lean fox and then it barked no more. All life was gradually becoming extinct.

Lines 36—39. Where life**snow**—imprisoned by the snowfall people inside their houses did not suffer the fate of animals outside. People were glad inside their houses. **O gladat its heart**—people were safe inside and imagined themselves to be the heart's secret of the snow. The only life was to be found 'at the heart' of the snow was inside the houses. **Watching thefamiliar things**—they looked at the familiar things which on account of the snowfall wore a strange aspect.

Explanation. The snowfall had made a havoc outside where little sign of animated life remained.

But inside their houses people felt happy as they were encased by the snow and were quite safe in-doors. Shut up inside they were like the secret kept safe in one's heart, and from their place of safety the watched the surrounding objects which though were familiar appeared weird by snowfall.

Lines 40—47. What dim.....on—all life and work being at a stand-still they had no idea of time. Dull hours passed away in darkness. **The dock.....wound**—the animate objects in the outside world have been described and now the poet tells what happened to objects in-doors. The clock stopped though it had been wound.

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As the cold hardened—with the increasing severity of cold the clock-work was also effected and it stopped. It is a nice picture that the poet has touched up in 'the cold hardened.' **Once they.....remembered**—they peeped out and watched the road if anybody remembered and cared for them as they had been lying entombed in snow. **Once they doubted.....bells**—the church bells did not sound for a long time, not even on sundays, and the clock had also stopped so they were not sure if they remembered correctly the days of the week. **Hide until.....shadow**—and thus protected itself from snowfall.

Explanation. The people in their houses could not measure timely hours or days. With increasing vigour of cold, the clock, recently wound, had stopped. No body even seemed to care for their fate encased in snow as they had been for long in their times. No aid came to them from outside. Even the church bells ceased to toll and they forgot the days of the week. A butterfly which had managed to keep itself

alive till spring by hiding itself under a ceiling, now dropped down dead. The cold was too severe for it and the world too bleak to afford it any food.

Lines 48—52. The coldness.....nigh—the people indoor were glad for some time but the vigour of cold made things hot for them now. It was creeping nearer. **The coldnessinto silences—**a sound is heard more distinctly and loudly when silence prevails, so coldness became more intensified in the cold already prevailing. **It was of.....the air—**up to this time it was snowfall which brought down cold from above but now the earth itself was losing its heat. **Drew down the sky—**helped the sky to spell disaster. **The air was crumbling—**the air itself by bitter cold had become brittle and was falling down in small bits or pieces. This is another powerful description. **There was no....sky—**it may be hard to imagine what was above if not the sky. The poet's idea is that the sky and atmosphere were falling down upon earth like showers of brittle things. Cold had frozen them to hardness and now they were coming down in showers.

Explanation. Gradually coldness became more and more intensified as a sound becomes louder in silence. Now the earth itself was losing its heat and intensifying the cold due to snowfall. Even the atmosphere and sky were frozen and began to fall in pieces upon the earth. The poet imagines the sky to have thus disappeared from above the earth.

Lines 53—61. Charred in.....grate—to keep themselves warm they were burning the wood of a bed-stead having no firewood left with them. The burning wood made a noise in the hearth, but it did not burn with a flame. Extreme cold made it impossible for the fire to burn with a flame.

The sting came heat—it was his mistake to suppose that when he touched the bar his hand was scorched with heat. It was extreme cold which gave him the sensation of burning. **He could not cold**—it was the burning sensation of cold and not of heat but he had never experienced it before. **She**—the man's wife. Only 'he' and 'she' are introduced to give an impersonal touch. **O do not sleep near me**—it is a mistake on her part to think that her heart is sleepy. It is the cold touch of death and her last sleep. She, however, desires to keep her heart warm for his sake who has already fallen into the grip of cold death. **No, no; sleep**—she is being overpowered by the chilly death and she is trying to resist it. **I will eyelids**—she would not disturb his sleep, which in reality is death. **Although I know their**—it is a false satisfaction on her part to believe that she can awaken him. It is a 'sleep' which none can disturb. **He closed own will**—he died peacefully and she believes that it was not death but voluntary sleep. She is not prepared to believe that he is dead. **He can I do not lift them**—if her efforts to awaken him would fail, she would no more be able to delude herself with the false belief that he was alive and sleeping and not dead. So she would refrain from disturbing him and continue to believe that he was only sleeping. The warmth of womanly love keeps her alive when he is chilled to death. We know that she is soon to follow him, and both will enjoy an undisturbed slumber.

Explanation. The poet imagines that he and she are left alone in a house when they have got no firewood left to keep themselves warm. A broken bed is burning but it does not flare up into a flame. He touches a bar thinking it to be hot but he is 'scorched' with cold and does not know that it is not heat but cold which causes the 'burning' sensation. She tries to

overcome the effect of intense cold and chilly death. But he is gone and peacefully sleeps for ever. She likes, however, to believe that he is simply sleeping and she should not disturb him. If she were only to touch his eyelids he would open them. Only so long as she does not disturb him she can falsely believe that he is still alive. But she herself is soon going the same way and they both would be slumbering undisturbed for ever.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

18. IN LADY STREET.

For the Life and Work of John Drinkwater see pages 12—14 of Notes.

Substance of the Poem.—The opening stanza of the poem describes a busy street of a city resounding with the noise of the passing of heavy traffic and cries of sellers of cheap and dirty stuffs. The street has on both the sides rows of mean-looking dirty houses and broken shops. The place which looks desolate and dreary seldom receives the rays of the sun, because the sky is perpetually overcast with clouds of smoke and dust, but when sometimes the rays do fall on the place the feeling of desolation and dreariness is intensified. The poet imagines that the sun is ashamed to fall over such an ugly place as Lady Street. But in the midst of these dirty and unwholesome surroundings there is one man who is able to retain his freshness of mind and enjoy his life. There is nothing very remarkable about the man. His youth was pent in the beautiful Gloucester lanes, and now he keeps a shop of fruits and flowers in Lady Street. But although he is physically in the street, the happy past which he spent in Gloucester lanes, is always present in his mind. His shop is full of beautiful fruits and sweet flowers from Gloucester lanes. His beautiful merchandise is in utter contrast with the dirty surroundings in Lady Street. In fact, he is living in a world altogether different from his surroundings. In the hill of Lady Street he has made a little paradise for himself in his shop, though his living room is quite dirty. He creates for himself a miniature

Gloucester lane in Lady Street and there he is happy. That is the one place in Lady Street where the sun is not loath to shine.

Remarks on the Poem.—The poem places in close juxtaposition and clear contrast the rich beauties of nature with the ugliness of the modern industrial cities. Lady Street is a picture of poverty and fruitless toil, filled with dirt, dust and din. But the little shop which represents Gloucester lanes and thereby nature is replete with richness and sweetness of colour and smell. Moreover, the scenes and gifts, colours and odours of Gloucester lanes which are haunting the senses of the man suggest joys of life. The city life of the civilized man has cost him very dear indeed. Who can measure his loss with his crushed soul and banishment from the surroundings of natural beauty?

The poem has another beauty. It shows what the mind is capable of doing. We know in itself it has a power of making hell of a heaven and heaven of a hell. It is our kingdom where we reign supreme. We find that the flower-seller does not at all mind his unwholesome surroundings, so busy he is always in brooding over the picture of Gloucester lanes, as he saw the place in his youth, and so the bad surroundings do not effect him at all. In the hell of Lady Street he is able to build a heaven for himself aided by his mind. In a way he has brought for himself the kingdom of heaven upon earth for which all Christians pray. The powers of memory and reflection are very valuable possessions of human beings and they often save from much trouble and inconveniences that are present around us.

The poem is written in tetrametres—lines consisting of four iambs each. The system of rhymes is

of no regular pattern. The stanzas are too, of varying length.

IN LADY STREET.

Notes.

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Lines 1—10. Lady Street—the original of this street is supposed to be Gooch Street in Birmingham. **Dingy rows**—dark line. **Sloven houses**—dirty houses badly required repairs and colouring. **Tattered shops**—shops kept in mean-looking broken houses. **Fried fish**—fish cooked in oil or in any other boiling fat. **Silver shining rails**—because they never rust on account of the constant running of trains on them. **Grinding wheels and swaying tops**—as the tall and heavy trams move their wheels make a grinding noise and their tops seem to be swinging to and fro in the air. **With their corded bales**—loaded with heavy packages of merchandise usually done up in canvas or gunny bags and bound with cords. **Screeching cars**—the movements of old and over-used cars produce a screaming noise. **Rags**—tattered and worn clothes. **Sickening meat**—the sight of which is extremely unpleasant and perhaps, because it is not fit for human consumption.

Explanation. John Drinkwater has given us a picture of a street where the poor class person live. He describes the heavy and dirty traffic which is constantly passing by the dark line of dirty houses and broken shops in Lady Street. In the street crowd together sellers of dried fish and old clothes and clever people who earn their living by pretending to tell others' fortune. Tall and heavy trams move with a rattling noise on shining rails and their high tops swing in the air as they run. Lorries carry--

ing their heavy freight of packed and corded merchandise run to and fro and the movement of old and over-used cars produces a screaming noise. All day long sellers of tattered clothes, bones and bad meat are crying to attract customers. The street as described in this stanza is filled with bustle and movement and resembles the busy but dirty quarter of a modern industrial city.

Lines 11—20. And when the Lady Street—the suggestion is that it is not often that sunshine finds its way in the street. The sky is overcast with dust and smoke. **Grey—sombre. Dull desolation**—the gloomy appearance of the street. **Grows in state**—the ugliness and untidiness of the street appears more clearly sometimes. **And the sun thing**—and the sun seems to be ashamed of shining on such a street. **Shamefast**—the earlier form of the word now altered, by false etymology, to 'shamefaced'. 'shamefast' meant modest. Here perhaps, the meanings of both 'shame-faced' and 'shamefast' are intended to be mingled. So it may mean—bashful 'retiring' and inauspicious. **A lord housed**—the sun is compared to a lord who finds himself lodged in a mean-looking house. **A god blush to see**—it is not a pleasant sight for gods to see. They would be ashamed to cast a glance at it.

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A song to sing—just as sometimes a nice song is sung at a place where it seems to be out of place, so the sun in Lady Street appeared to be something inappropriate in its dirty surroundings. **Despiteously**—injured; outraged. **Like a gold ironic rod**—the golden rays of the sun falling in the street appear like the rusted blackness of iron, because they seem to lose their brightness by falling on such a dull and dirty place.

Explanation. It is rarely that the rays of the sun find entrance in Lady Street, because the sky is always overcast with dust and smoke. And when they do find their way they shine most bashfully and and inauspiciously, and falling on the gloomy houses render the entire scene all the more dreary and unattractive. The poet suggests that the sun shines ineffectively over Lady Street because he is loath to waste his rays on such an improper place. The sun shining over Lady Street is like a rich man finding his way in a mean looking house or a god in surroundings where he would be ashamed to be found. The sun there is like a song in an inappropriate place, and his golden rays lie there as if outraged, and devoid of their lustre like dull iron rods.

Lines 21—27, Grey men sun—an old looking dull man is happy when the sun shines and he welcomes him. **He never bent will**—he never tried to mould his life according to a desired ideal. He was a man of irresolute and weak will living a life of drift. **His travelling continent**—though he travelled but never climbed far off high mountainous lands. His achievement in life has been quite insignificant though he had worked constantly. **Nor has the strong**—not only is he a man of weak will and determination but his physique is also thin and emaciated. **Cob-webbed walls**—the four walls are covered with nets of cobwebs.

Explanation. Yet there is one man in Lady Street who loves sunshine and welcomes it when it appears. He is not a successful man in life. He never tried to shape his life according to some definite ideal. He aimed at nothing and gained too nothing. He has not been to far-off lands nor has he ever been physically strong. He is just an ordi-

nary man living in Lady Street in an untidy and cob-webbed house in which he has a bed also.

Lines 28—41. A time is.....head—he always remembers a time now past and the memory of it always reverberates in his mind. **Of youth in Gloucester lanes**—the period of youth he spent in a healthier quarter of the city. **He hears**—with the help of his memory he fancies he is hearing even now. **Barley-blades**—leaves of the barley plants. **Tapping**—striking lightly against trees etc. with its beak. **Woodpecker**—a bird with a long beak which clings to tree stems and taps them to discover insects. **Beeches**—smooth-barked glossy-leaved forest trees. **Thistle**—a genus of prickly plants. And ‘thistle-spades’ seems to mean spades of which the handle was made of thistle wood. **Slicing the sinewy roots**—he heard the sound made by cutting or digging strong roots of trees by means of spades. **Sinewy**—strong and fibrous. **Filbert**—the nuts of the cultivated hazel. **Avenues**—lines of trees or plants growing regularly on both the sides of a road. **Honeysuckle**—a sweet scented delicate flower and its shrub: it is a species of *Lonicera*. **Thrown along the hedge**—honey-suckle was grown on the hedge. **Lines alone and yet not alone**—though he is solitary in his room yet by imagining himself in Gloucester lane he seems to see and hear things which drive away the thought of loneliness from his mind.

Explanation. Although he lives in Lady Street now the scenes that he saw and the sounds that he heard in Gloucester lanes in his youth are always recurring in his mind. Every moment he fancies he listens, as formerly, the wind passing through barley fields, woodpeckers tapping at the smooth stems of the beech trees and the thistle-spades cutting into pieces the fibrous roots of trees. Like-

wise, he fancies he sees every moment the nuts of hazel copse raised like a hood and intertwined rows of hops on the sides of the roads, and swells the fragrance of the honeysuckle spreading over the hedges. He seems to be living above in Lady Street but, in fact, the sweet memory of Gloucester lane is always with him.

Lines 42—60. The cobwebbed room—in which he lives

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Plies a trade—carries on a business. **A coloured trade**—because he deals in many coloured flowers and fruits. **A show shop**—the ware in his shop displays many beautiful colours. **Filberts**—the nuts of cultivated hazel. **Red with air**—the apples have retained their colour and have not yet lost their freshness in the dull atmosphere of Lady Street. **Marrows**—gourds. **Gaudy**—displaying their colours. **Brave**—used in the old sense ‘richly dressed.’ **Chrysanthemums**—a genus of richly coloured flowers brought especially from Japan. It is the pride of gardens and is displayed in flower shows. **And times**—at times. **Glossy**—shining. **Pheasant lies store**—sometimes among his fruits and vegetables may be found a pheasant with its bright coloured feathers. **Tyrian dyes**—‘tyre, the ancient Phoenician poet, was famous for a purple dye made from a shell-fish raised from the depths of the sea near it.’ **A prize of violets**—carefully selected beautiful violets. The word ‘prize’ suggests something luckily acquired. **Mushrooms satin-skinned**—shining coloured green fingers. **Unfamiliar wind**—a gust of wind in Lady Street with which the flowers are not familiar. They grew in open fields. **Robbed of favour**—which lacks the sweet smell of the wind blowing in the open fields, gardens and

woodlands. **Favour**—charm. **Stirs**—in the shop. **Daffodils**—a kind of pale yellow flower.

Explanation. Yes, the Gloucester lanes are always with him. Below the cob-webbed room he keeps a shop of many coloured flowers and fruits all grown and brought from Gloucester lanes. In that shop he stocks brown hazel-nuts, apples grown red in the wholesome climate of Gloucester, smooth, round gourds grown in Gloucester fields, cabbages, cauliflowers, plumes and rich and deeply coloured chrysanthemums. At times we find among his store a shining pheasant, with its neck-feathers surpassing in their richness of colour even the famous dyes prepared at Tyre. At times the man is lucky enough to procure for sale in his shop violets and fresh and shining mushrooms besprinkled with dew. Sometimes he sets in the midst of his store of flowers and fruits beautiful daffodils and the city wind, with which the flowers are unacquainted, and which is altogether devoid of the heartiching charms comes and stirs them.

Lines 61—82. All day long.... ..houses—the description given in the beginning is repeated here to emphasise the general appearance and atmosphere. **Desolate rows**—of cheerless shops. **Shops that..... eyes**—desolate shops are compared to the eyes with a vacant stare of despondency. **Day long..... cries**—the same kind of cheerless and monotonous life continues from day to day. **The fortune-tellers... ..not any right**—when telling the fortune of persons they would not say anything unfavourable or disagreeable. They would draw a happy picture of lives which are most miserable. **Drift**—poor people who have no strength of character or fixity of purpose. **That has not.....drift**—perfectly irresolute and having no will power at all. **The**

wage of sleep is won at night—the reward of day's work is sleep for them at night.

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The hall of Lady Street—this man is quite unconcerned with the miserable plight of the poor people, and the unwholesome surroundings of the street. **A shining paradise**—it is a beauty spot in the street. **The sun is not shine**—the sun is happy to send down his bright rays to fall on the shop. In all other parts of the street the rays lose their lustre, but not so here. **Send a mare air**—bright rays come down upon the shop. **The grey man sweet**—and nobody else does, because the sun exposes the ugliness of the whole place.

Explanation. The poet compares Lady Street to hell because in that street the din of traffic is perpetually passing by the dirty and dreary-looking houses and with the shops looking like blank eyes of disheartened persons. The fortune-tellers there are telling every-body of a bright future although there is no trace of joy or happiness in any one's life. The people who are absolutely devoid of any motive in life and have no stamina are driven like cattle to hard work and thereby win the reward of sound sleep at night. But in the midst of this hell of Lady Street that grey man has built a heaven for himself. His shop with its many-coloured merchandise of flowers and fruits is a shining paradise. There he sells chrysanthemums, red and yellow plums and cauliflowers. That shop is the one place in Lady Street where the rays of the sun do not fall on an unworthy object and reaching the richly coloured flowers and fruits through the air create a rare effect. The grey man although he is in Lady Street yet to him sunshine is as welcome as it is in Gloucester lanes.

LAURENCE BINYON.

19. THE DRYAD.

For the life and work of Laurence Binyon see pages 34—35 of Notes.

Substance of the Poem.—The ancient Greeks conceived the idea of nature-spirits. Such a pagan conception of nature does not prevail to-day. But the disappearance of popular belief in spirits, fairies and nymphs has deprived us of an unknown imaginative world. Our relation with nature has also undergone a change. The poet regrets this and in one of his moods resolves to go to the haunts of a Dryad and see her with his own eyes. His search proves futile, though by means of his imagination he sees her moving from place to place. Her imaginary vision of beauty charms him. Failing to find her he extols the narcissus because he believes that this pure white flower must know her whereabouts and the secrets of her heart. He questions the flower about her. Her single blessedness is not due to the poet that she has no feeling of love in her. She controls her feeling wisely so that she may not have to court disappointment. She is not quite lovely. She enjoys the company of ethereal objects, herself having no physical body. She is happy in cherishing her sacred love though it is not bestowed upon my person. The nymph exists even today though not in the same form as she existed in the minds of the ancient Greeks. The poet sees her vision in the delights and joys of happy girls and triumphant boys. The poet is not disappointed by his pursuit because he requires bodily joys and plea-

sures and after all, he is able to discover her the pure delights of the young.

Remarks on the Poem.—It is one of the finest poems in the selection as it is animated by a rare love of nature. The poet would be happy if he had been born a pagan with his belief in nature-spirits. What his faith lacks his imagination supplies. For the beautiful descriptions of nature, especially the multi-coloured flowers we can compare this poem with some of the typical works of Keats. The long and elaborate passage describing flowers and extolling the narcissus is superb. The poet's yearning for the vision of beauty, his fruitless search for the nymph, strike a modern note of venture into speculative and philosophic realms.

The main theme of the poem is love of nature. It is feared that with the advancement of modern knowledge a simple human relationship with nature is gone. This loss from the imaginative point of view is very great indeed. Perhaps it is better, for our imaginative delight and satisfaction that at times we put ourselves in the same relation with nature as the ancient Greeks did. If we seek a living beauty in nature, as the poet pursued the nymph, in the end we shall not be disappointed. We shall gain something which will immensely enrich our life.

THE DRYAD.

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Lines 1—12. Dryad—a nymph of trees who was believed to die together with the tree which had been her abode, and with which she had come into existence. **Ilex**—an evergreen shrub having leathery,

shining and spinous leaves, and scarlet or yellow berries, much used for Christmas decorations. It is popularly known as 'holly'. **Laurel**—the bay-tree, used by the ancients for making honorary wreaths. **Stirred**—moved excitedly. **Stole**—passed quietly. **Circle of smooth green**—on which the trees grow. **Moving heart and eye**—affecting feelings as well as the desire to see. **Some colour strong**—the wind in attempting to catch fragrance passed through the bows and stirred them. **Fair virgin shape gaze**—some nymph or fairy beautiful like a virgin but invisible to human eyes.

Explanation. The poet observing a slight muffling of the leaves of holly, laurel and other trees enquires whether some spirits had passed by them, the beauty of which stirred them as young men's hearts are moved to praise when they see a beautiful women, because these trees are also imagined to be affected like human beings by the sight of beauty. Or the wind passed through them in its attempt to catch fragrance; or some nymph, invisible to human eyes, but having the lovely features of a girl passed that way.

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Lines 13—24. **O for that morning world**—the early world of Greece, when the popular imagination created nature spirits—hamadryads to inhabit trees, naiads the fountains and Syrx the reeds. **Hollow oak**—where hamadryads lived. **Fount**—naiads lived in them. **Flowering reed**—Syrinx lived there. **Were storied face**—the Greeks imagined spirits residing in different objects of nature. The sea, rivers, trees, fountains were all peopled by spirits and nymphs invented by the imagination of the Greeks. **By dropping hair dew-pearled**—faces of spirits or nymphs on which were hanging ringlets

of hair bedecked with the pearls of dew. **Strange eyes** **men**—the eyes of nymphs were strange and had a different look from that of men. **Shy with the firm grace** **flying**—there bodies were so graceful and shy as those of fawns in their flight. **Yet of human kin**—though so different from him, man could establish some kind of relation with them. **Whose** **no**—man could receive their guidance. **Could we** **pride**—only if man could remove from his mind doubt, suspicion and pride. **A world to win**—man could be introduced to another unseen world by them. **Where all that** **us**—everything has a language and which man speak. Man can be put in communion with our unseen world. **Now** **no**—but we cannot communicate with it now as the nymphs and spirits are afraid of us. **Fresh glooms**—bowers of green trees.

Explanation. The poet yearns for that early world of Greece when nature was worshipped and adored and every object in nature was imagined to have a nymph or spirit dwelling in it. The hollows of trees, fountains and reeds all had there nymphs and each one of them had its legend. These nymphs were imagined to possess human faces with dew-pearled hair. Their eyes had not in them the looks of human beings and their forms were as graceful and shy as of fawns in flight. Yet they had a kinship with man. Only if he could give up his doubt, suspense and pride they could introduce him to an unknown world where every object had a language and man could understand it. But to-day man cannot enter that hidden world of nature as his own fear has made it impossible for him to commune with it. The poet longs to enter that inner world of nature where he can see nymphs and their world. With this object he enters the dark bowers of green trees.

Lines 25—36. Here—in the dark bower he sees no nymphs or spirits. **Lonelier is the glade**—which is supposed to be the haunt of nymphs. **The hollows of still shade**—bowers appear darker. **Ah, yet.** **.spring**—he may not be able to see the nymph but there is no doubt that she was near the water a moment before. **How solitary. bloom**—the white beautiful flowers of narcissus are shining and trembling in that lonely place and so it is clear that the nymph must have come that way. **Narcissus**—this beautiful and highly fragrant flower has a legendary story associated with it. Narcissus was a beautiful youth, son of the river-god Cephissus. The nymph echo fell in love with him, but he did not return her passion. To avenge this offence, Venus caused him to become enamoured of his own reflection in the waters of a fountain, and he pined away until he was changed into a flower. It is evident to the poet that a nymph must have passed that way because narcissus flowers are trembling and shining. **Lichened**—covered with a flowerless plant called 'lichen'. **Swerves over into. . . .gloom**—takes a sharp turn and flows in on the dark green plain covered with moss. **Their snowy frail flames**—the white petals of the flowers of narcissus shine brightly. **On the ripple gleam**—are reflected on the surface of the water. **And all.illumine**—make the whole scene look very beautiful.

Explanation. The poet enters those bowers and glades with the hope of meeting a nymph face to face but he is disappointed. The glade which is often frequented by nymphs is lonelier than the other parts of the wood. But there is no doubt in the mind of the poet that a nymph has really just passed that way near the spring. His belief is confirmed because the white beautiful narcissus flowers are

shining and trembling in that lonely place and this must have been caused by the presence of the nymph. The flowers snow-white and delicate are beautifying the whole scene, and near that spot where the grey stone covered with lichen is lying and the stream takes a sharp turn and flows over the green moss-covered land, the white petals of narcissus are reflected in the water and thus they seem to brighten the whole place. The flowers are imagined to be in a state of excitement because a nymph passed by them.

Lines 37—48. Nerving her branch—supporting her hand on a delicate bough. **Glided on—**swiftly moved away.

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Half-turned in lovely fear—she must have cast a shy glance behind at this spot and in that pose she must have looked very beautiful indeed. **Like moonbeams blanch—**just as moonbeams falling upon a sandy coast, fringed with the white of foams of waves, brighten up the whole scene. **Blanch—**whiten. **A sight to heart—**if we were to look upon so enchanting a vision of beauty our heart would stop beating. **Alas, but beauty—**it is a pity that man is not destined to see that vision. **Rapturously—**in ecstasy. **Thou perfect flower—**narcissus. **Pure flower—**because it has in the quintessence of beauty, delicacy and fragrance which flowers glory in. The flower is pure and therefore it knows all about her.

Explanation. The poet in his pursuit of the nymph arrives at another spot where he feels that she must have stopped for a while. He looks at a delicate branch and imagines that she rested her hand upon it and paused to listen if she was being

pursued, and then swiftly her delicate shoulders shone and her whole pose presented such a vision of beauty that if a man could get a glimpse of it, his heart would cease to beat and he would find himself under a spell. But unfortunately man is not destined to have a sight of that beauty. Just then he hears a bird in a tree overhead singing in its ecstasy but he turns back again to the narcissus flower which being perfect in beauty, and fragrance and purity, he thinks, must be knowing the whereabouts of the nymph and all that passes into her mind.

Lines 49—67. **White sweetness**—the flower of narcissus **Richest**.....**cling**—it is exquisitely fragrant. **Purely**.....**spring**—this flower combines in itself the best that spring has to offer. In beauty, delicacy, fragrance it is the best product of spring. **Voluptuous**—contributing to sensual pleasures. **Thou dost enclose**.....**year**—all colours combine in this flower and thus make it white. We know that the rainbow colours when combined produce the white colour. The narcissus is white because it is pure and has in it all the colours. **The advancing colours**—the flowers of different colours which bloom at their proper time in the whole year after spring time. **Thou hast burned**—the narcissus absorbs the rays of the sun more than any other flower. **To shine so keenly clear**—the snow-white colour is due to this fact also that it absorbs the rays of the sun more than the reddest rose. **Divine**—make out; guess. **Shadowed**—reflected. **Radiance**—brightness. **Frail coral tinges**—the light red colour of the coral. **Anemone**—a plant of the crowfoot family. **Clouds upon**—imparts its colour. **Columbine**—a genus of plants having five coloured sepals, which soon fall off, and five petals, each terminating below in a horn-shaped spur or nectary. **Wallflower**

—a plant with yellow fragrant flowers, found on old walls. **Tulip**—a genus of bulbous plants of many varieties, having highly coloured bell-shaped flowers. **Sanguine clarity**—of clear blood red colour. **Pansy**—a species of violet developed by cultivation into large blossoms of great variety of colour—also ‘Heart’s-ease’, ‘love-in-idleness’. **Midnight-purple of sole star**—the colour of the pansy resembling that of a single bright star at midnight. **That wander far from thee**—do not come up to the beauty of the narcissus; cannot be compared with it. **Wilder glories** **assume**—their beauty is devoid of the elegance, purity and delicacy of the narcissus. **Peony**—a genus of plants with large showy flowers, carmine, in some white. **Tyre**—deep-purple. **All to thy lost intensity aspire**—all these flowers eagerly desire to shine in bright colours which at their brightest have mingled in the narcissus and have turned thee white. **Toward thee they** **gloom**—when darkness surrounds them they all look up to the narcissus for brightness and light. **They are all** **perfect fire**—the narcissus alone is the perfect flower in its white sweetness and all other flowers are imperfect as they do not combine all the colours in them as the white colour of the narcissus does.

Explanation. This beautiful long passage is a hymn of praise on the narcissus. The poet extols its sweetness and white colour and places it above all other flowers, which in spite of their display of colours cannot approach the beauty, fragrance and pure whiteness of the narcissus as it combines all colours in itself. The narcissus draws from spring-time all that is heat in it and similarly it absorbs the rays of the sun more than any other flower. This is the reason of its ‘white sweetness.’ The poet mentions a number of bright coloured flowers to show

that not one of them can approach the narcissus however exquisite the display of its colours may be. All the colours of different flowers are at their brightest in the narcissus, only they are mixed up into the white colour. And therefore no flower can be proud of its colour because in its fullest brightness it is found only in the narcissus. The narcissus is a perfect flower which no other flower can claim to be.

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Lines 68—86. And she—the nymph. **That only haunts praise ?**—the nymph likes to live in woodland solitude, but does she like solitude for its own sake or there is some other motive for her love of freedom and loveliness? Perhaps she does not like to give her heart to anybody. **Doth she apt to fault**—love does not come in the way of her life, because, perhaps, she is aware that passion often misleads. **Turns she eyes—**does not satisfy the natural desire to love and be loved in return. **Pale famine to exalt**—likes to pine away in loneliness and prefers starving her feelings to satisfying them. **Her bosom's dewdrop—**she has not yet killed the feeling of love in her heart. She is still too inexperienced to know what love is. Her aspirations and yearnings of love are not killed but unawakened yet. **Imaging complete all life**—her future happiness of a full and complete life is reflected in her present state of feelings, which are yet in a dormant stage. **Full-stored thrill**—she will certainly respond generously to all emotional experiences. Her heart has not become so cold as to remain unaffected by emotional appeals. **No hope less beat**—it is impossible to imagine such a being as the nymph to be devoid of feelings and emotions and to live an imperfect or

incomplete life. The highest purpose of life must find its fulfilment in her. If she has a heart she must feel what love is. **She has failed**—she knows no disappointment and her heart has never been embittered by the unrealized hopes. **She not condemns enshrines it**—for her true love is something sacred to be adored in her heart, but at the same time she does not condemn love that gives us joy and pleasure. **Where is the love**—we fondly believe that our first love would last for ever but it is not so. **The joy spent**—the ardour soon cools down and we are left disappointed. **It glows breast**—but her love is constant and burns steadily like a sacred flame. **Untamed to languor's ebb**—it never cools down. **Nor by hot passion rent**—nor runs to madness or turns into an uncontrollable passion.

Explanation. After extolling the narcissus the poet hopes that his questions put to that flower would be answered. The pure white flower alone knows the secret of the nymph's heart and it alone can enlighten the poet about her. Why does she like loneliness? She wants to keep herself free from the responsibilities which love for another lays upon her? Or she does not like to fall in the snare of love because so often we are cheated and disappointed in it? Does she like to pine away in a lonely, single life, and does she prefer to live a life devoid of love and its emotional experiences? It is not possible from her very nature, it is unthinkable that she would starve her feelings and emotions. Her life must be complete and perfect and her heart can shut out no emotional experiences. It is a mistake to suppose that generous emotions of love cannot stir her heart. She is yet young and all her hopes of future happiness are in embryo, but they are capable of fulfilment.

She is fortunate that her hopes are never belied, and she has experienced no bitter disappointments. For her love is like a sacred fire though she does not conduce the love which gives us joy of life. Her love is all the more beautiful because it has not yet been given to any one. She is wife in thus controlling her feelings. Neither does she allow her love to flare up in a concerning fire, nor does she allow it to cool down. It burns like a steady flame ; whereas with us the case is different. Our first love has failed to yield all joy we had expected of it. Our dream of happiness often vanishes very soon leaving us disappointed and embittered in life.

Lines 87—98. Pure abstaining.....delight—the nymph is full of joy and happiness and so she is called the priestess of delight ; at the same time she is pure and her emotion of love is properly restrained. **That treasure's.....sanctity—**for her love is sacred and she adores it like something holy without bestowing it upon anybody. Her love is too sacred to be given to another, and so she lives a life of sheer blessedness. **Not thou.....dream—**did the nymph exist only in the imagination of the ancient poets of Greece and they had no real existence ? **Mated with—**having for her company. **Song's flight** like the nymph herself an immaterial object, but not without sweetness and beauty the flight of a song is imagined to be her companion. **With beckoning.....gleam—**she enjoys the company of the twilight which calls her. **Yet we.....bliss—**but we mortal human beings who possess bodies and are not eternal like the nymph have bodies, pleasures to enjoy. Eternal or immaterial objects and satisfy man's yearning for joy. **Nay thou has still thine hour—**it is a mistake to suppose that nymphs are a myth and they do not exist any more. They do exist but

in a different form. **In a girl's life-trusting April mirth—** when we see a girl happy in her youth and feels that life is an uninterrupted joy, let us realize that the nymph is there. The nymph now appears in the form of a happy girl.

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Noble boy's eyes—a boy happy with his success in a noble endeavour. **Thou shinest—** the nymph appears in these two places. **Wisdom loses to be wise**—delight which people shun and live laborious days in order to gain wisdom.

Explanation. The nymph lives a pure happy life without falling under the influence of passionate love. For her love is a sacred thing to be cherished in single-blessedness. But the poet asks himself if the nymph is a pure myth and a creation of the Greek imagination or she still exists upon this earth. She is in the company of ethereal and immaterial objects, such as the flight of a song, the twilight or the first rose fading in the early morning. We human beings possessing physical bodies cannot be satisfied with imaginary pleasures. We require physical joys. But it is a mistake to think that the nymph does not exist now. The poet sees her, with all her charms and power, in the delight which a girl enjoys trusting life to be an unbroken spell of happiness, and in that satisfaction which is experienced by a boy happy at the end of a noble endeavour. In such delights the nymph may still be seen though these are shunned by wise people in order to acquire knowledge and wisdom.

D. H. LAWRENCE.

20. SNAKE.

Life and Work.—David Herbert Lawrence, English novelist, poet, essayist and playwright was born on September 11, 1885, in the village of Eastwood in Nottinghamshire, England. A weakly child Lawrence preferred books to the games of his playmates. He was educated at Nottingham High School, and at sixteen was employed as a clerk in a manufacturer's office. He, however, fell critically ill with pneumonia a year later and had to give up his job. On recovery he became a pupil teacher in Eastwood. He spent two years at the Nottingham University College Day Training Section; then went in 1908 as assistant master to an elementary school at Croydon.

Lawrence began his literary career with fine small poems published in the *English Review*. He was encouraged in his writing during these early years by a girl who lived on a farm near Eastwood. His first novel *The White Peacock* was published in 1911, when the author was twenty-five, mainly with the help of Ford Madox Hueffer, who was then the editor of the *English Review*. The book was received enthusiastically by the reading public and reviewed prominently by the English journals. A second attack of pneumonia ended his career as a school master. On his recovery Lawrence was invited to the home of Professor Ernest Weekly, whereupon his first meeting with the professor's wife. Lawrence fell irrevocably in love with her. The name of the lady was Frieda Von Richthofen. In the same year Lawrence published his second novel *The Trespasser*.

With the money he got from this he went with Frieda to Germany and thence to Italy. Early in 1913 his first book of poems, *Love Poems and Others* was published, and soon afterward came his novel *Sons and Lovers*. The novel had been rejected by his first publisher as "one of the dirtiest books he had ever read." The first part of the book was, by Lawrence's own admission, strictly autobiographical.

Lawrence and Frieda were married in a London Registry Office on July 13, 1914 after she had secured her divorce. They never had any children. During the War, Lawrence lived in extreme poverty. Being married to a German wife he was under constant suspicion as a pro-German.

The Rainbow appeared in September 1915, a frank statement of sex in its physical aspects. The novel was condemned as obscene and the entire edition destroyed by Court order. Lawrence did not publish another novel for five years. In 1917 he brought out the poems *Look ! We Have Come Through*, which told the story of his life with Frieda. *Women in Love* was printed late in 1920 by private subscription in New York, after being turned down by the London publishers. Of this novel Lawrence said 'I do admire it but I am not everybody'. After 1921 Lawrence travelled extensively mostly in quest of health. He published a number of books later, *The Plumed Serpent*, *Tenderness* and others. He made friendship during this time with Katherine Masefield in America, and Aldous Huxley, who was staying on the Continent. On March 2, 1930 he died of tuberculosis at the age of forty-four. His wife and Aldous Huxley were with him where he died.

Lawrence in his grave almost immediately became the subject of heated controversy, particularly among those who had known him intimately.

As a Poet.—Lawrence is a novelist and poet. But his novels are likely to live longer than his poetry. His creative genius is erratic and feverish. *Sons and Lovers* won him a place in the company of leading contemporary novelists.

He is the laureate of youth's futilities. With regard to his early work as a poet we are tempted to wish that the flame of its desire had been only strong enough to burn its record in print.

His outlook and style were deeply influenced by his travels and a study of psycho-analytical doctrine. The sex motive is the most remarkable feature of his work. He wanted sex to be the source through which comes the pure central fire of life. He was scornful of the modern tendency the aim of which is to spiritualize and intellectualize love. For him the body is not the tool or toy of the mind. He sought to recover the primal energy of Eden. Passion was the flame of his life.

Substance of the Poem.—One summer day a snake came to drink at the water-trough of the poet. The poet was in his summer pyjamas and was going to the trough with a pitcher for water when all at once he saw a snake coming. The snake reached the edge of the trough, put its head into it and began to sip water. The poet meanwhile waited because the snake had come before him and the poet thought it proper to allow it the first chance. At the sight of the snake his first impulse, prompted by his education and the traditional enmity between snake and man, was to kill it, but he also felt that in his heart of hearts he was feeling a certain fascination for it. When the snake had drunk to its fill it turned and moved away slowly towards its hole. The poet was in the meantime engaged in self-introspection. He was analysing his feelings and trying to ascertain whether it was

due to cowardice that he had spared the snake or due to genuine generosity. The snake reached the wall-front, put its head into the crevice, and was drawing itself in when the poet suddenly put his pitcher down and threw a log of wood at the snake. In a flash the lower part of its body, which was still outside the hole shook and disappeared.

The poet at this moment remembered the story of the albatross in Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and he longed very much that the snake would come back again. He repented his mean behaviour, improper and discourteous, towards one of the lords among living creatures; and thus tried to atone for his fault.

Remarks on the Poem.—The poem might have been inspired by a real incident, but it is very much allied in theme and spirit to Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." The subject is the same—love of all living creatures and the misfortunes we invite upon us by cruelty towards them. In Coleridge's poem the story is built round the killing of a harmless bird—the albatross, where as Lawrence expresses his liking for and sympathy with a snake. Considering the enmity that has existed between man and serpent ever since our first parents were beguiled in the Garden of Eden, the poem by Lawrence seems more daring, yet we find that in Coleridge's poem when the ship is caught in the sultry heat of the stagnant seas the redemption of the accused mariner begins when he is for the first time attracted by the beauty of the many-coloured reptiles who swim about the ship. The poem has a ring of sincerity because the poet describes his own real feelings. He, swayed between two rival feelings of awe and attraction, between the desire to kill and wish to recrown it on earth, presents a psychological moment

of great intensity. Equally poignant is the repentance which warns us against killing God's creatures. It is a moving appeal for love of "all things great or small" for "man and bird and beast."

SNAKE.

Notes.

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Lines 1—3. Water-trough—a big basin or open receptacle for storing water. **Pyjamas for the heat**—the poet was not fully dressed; he wore pyjamas it was very warm.

Explanation. One very hot day while I was in my summer pyjamas a snake came to drink water from the open receptacle where water is stored for me.

Lines 4--6. Strange-scented shade—the shady spot under the tree filled with unfamiliar odours. **Carob tree**—a wild plant growing abundantly on the Mediterranean coast and yielding a bean or pod that forms nutritious food for cattle and horses.

Explanation. The poet came down the steps in the deep shade of the carob tree which was filled with strange odours, with his pitcher for water. But he found that a snake was present near the trough even before him. So he decided to wait and take his turn after the snake had drunk water. In common courtesy in our intercourse with human beings we wait for our turn and allow precedence to those who have come before us, so the poet waits till the snake has satisfied himself with water because he was the first to come.

Lines 7—15. From a fissure in.....gloom—from a crevice or small opening in the wall of

earth where it is dark. **Trailed his.....down—**carried his yellow brown body slowly creeping on his soft belly. **Slackness**—the slowly creeping snake. The abstract is used here for the concrete. **Dripped—oozed.** **In a small clearness**—a small collection of clear water. **Slack**—relaxed ; loose.

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Some one.....waiting—the poet shows to the snake courtesy ordinarily shown to fellow beings.

Explanation. The snake came out of a crevice in the earth wall in the thick shade and crept sluggishly on his soft belly to the brink of the trough. He put his throat upon the stone bottom of the trough and silently sipped water from out of a small store of clear transparent water that had oozed from the tap. Softly he took water into his long relaxed body through his straight mouth. While I was silently waiting for my turn because some one else was before me and I was the second comer.

Lines 16—21. **Looked at me vaguely**—only half-attentively the snake looked at the poet and became aware of his presence. **Flickered**—moved gently ; made the tongue quiver. **Two-forked**—bifurcated. **Mused a moment**—considered the situation. He is not afraid of a person's presence and is in no hurry to depart. **And stooped.....more**—which he would not do if the poet's presence had been felt disturbing. **Bowels of the earth**—interior of the earth. **Sicilian July**—in the month of July in the island of Sicily. **Etna**—the famous active volcano on the north-east coast of Sicily.

Explanation. The snake raised his head from the trough and looked vacantly round and saw me, just as drinking cattle in the middle of their drinking do. He made his double quiver, waited for a moment and

stopped and then drank a little more, quite unconcerned at my presence there. The snake was earth-brown, nay earth golden because he had come from the hot interior of the earth in the month of July near the burning volcano, Etna, in the island of Sicily.

Lines 22—26. The voice of my education—as an educated man I thought. **Gold are venomous**—yellow or golden coloured snakes are poisonous in Italy. **And voices in me**—but my conscience also said. **If you are a man**—and therefore unafraid and knowing the proper thing to do. **Finish him off**—kill him.

Explanation. When the poet saw the snake it struck to him that he was to be killed at once because every educated man is trained to believe that all dangerous things must be destroyed. And then in Sicily these golden snakes are poisonous while the black ones are not so. The poet heard his conscience prompting him to take a stick and break and kill the snake.

Lines 27—30. **But must I confess**—because as an educated man his feelings should have been different. **Like a guest in quiet**—the snake had come quite innocently to drink water and could claim the hospitality we show to our other guests. **Depart peaceful**—without doing any injury to anybody. **Pacified**—satisfied; having quenched his thirst. **Thankless**—without expressing any gratitude and boring the poet with formal thanks. **Into the earth**—to its hole where the earth is warm. the volcano being near.

Explanation. But the poet confesses frankly that in spite of the traditional animosity between man and snake he felt charmed with the reptile who had come like a silent guest to drink at his water trough and

who went back quietly and satisfied, but without boring the poet with any formal expression of gratitude, into his hole in the warm earth. The poet's feeling was to treat him with courtesy and show him hospitality as we do to a guest.

Lines 31—36. **Was it cowardice**—the poet wants to find out for himself the real feeling which lay behind his idea of sparing the snake. **Was it fear?** **Perversity**—obstinacy in something wrong. **I longed to talk to him**—to treat him in a polite courteous manner. **Humility**—dishonour or unnecessary weakness. Had the poet insulted his manhood by being so meek towards the snake.

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And yet those voices—the promptings from within to kill the snake were becoming more insistent. **If you were him**—the poet began to doubt if his real motive in sparing the snake was his humanity or cowardice.

Explanation. In a mood of introspection the poet puts several questions to himself and the answer suggested in each case is in the negative. "Was it for lack of courage that I did not kill the snake?, or was it error to wish to treat him gently like a guest?" he asks to himself. He says that he felt honoured that the snake had come to his water trough. "Is it a dishonour thus to feel honoured?" But the voices within him which had urged him to kill the snake are telling him even now that if he had courage enough he would not have spared the snake.

Lines 37—40. **Truly I was afraid**—the poet has found out that fear was certainly one reason for not killing the snake, but there was something more. **Honoured still more**—he felt it a great privilege.

Seek my hospitality—come to my water-trough like a silent guest who trusts his host. **From the dark**
 **earth**—out of the unknown recesses of the earth.

Explanation. The poet was afraid a little, no doubt but all the same he felt greatly honoured that the snake had come to him as a guest and trust in the poet as a host, out of the dark and unknown recesses of the earth.

Lines 41—49. **Dreamily**—slowly and carelessly. Such a movement shows that the snake was not afraid of the poet and trusted him. **Like a forked night on the air**—the snake put out his bifurcated tongue which being very black is compared to night. **Like a god**—in a grand manner least perturbed by surroundings. **Unseeing**—without observing things on which he cast his eyes. **Slowly turned his head**—the poet observes the minutest detail of the snake's movements and describes things in detail. Only these movements can help us in understanding what the snake may be thinking. **Thrice adream**—as if he was in a perfectly dreaming state ; drowsily. **Slow length**—his body which being long he moved very slowly. **Curving round**—taking a turn. **The broken bank**—the wall was of earth and not in a good condition. **Wall-face**—the side of the wall facing him.

Explanation. The snake drank from the trough and raised his head drowsily like a drunkard, moved his forked black tongue, as black as the night, in the air and seemed to lick his lips. He looked around majestically like a god, but without fixing his gaze on anything or actually observing anything in particular. Then he slowly turned his head and moved very drowsily as if he was in a perfectly dreaming state. He turned his long body and began to move back slowly to climb the earth wall, facing the poet.

Lines 50—62. Snake-easing his shoulders—relaxing the upper part of his body as a snake alone can do. **A sort of protest**—the poet's feeling changes. He feels it a great mistake on his part to have allowed the snake so to disappear in his hole. **Deliberately going into that blackness**—the snake knew his hole and went in calmly. **Slowly drawing himself after**—gathering his whole body into the hole. **His back was turned**—the snake had completely disappeared in his hole. **Clumsy rod**—an unshapely thick piece of wood. **Threw at.....clatter**—deliberately producing some noise, but it was hurled at the water trough.

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I think.....him—it is doubtful if the poet really desired to do injury to the snake. **Left behind**—which had not yet entered the hole. **Convulsed in undignified haste**—shook violently and lost all its majesty and splendour of slow movement hitherto observed. **Writhed like lightning**—violently twisted his body with the rapidity of lightning. **The earth-lipped fissure**—the crevice or hole in the earth. The hole the lips of which were of earth. **Intense still**—extremely peaceful. **With fascination**—charmed.

Explanation. As the snake put his head into the hole, and relaxing the upper part of his body was gathering his whole length into it the poet was struck with a strong feeling of horror at the idea of the snake's peaceful retirement into the utter darkness of his hole. So long as the snake could be seen fully the poet could resist the idea of killing him. But now that the reptile had more than half disappeared, his mind changed and he was filled with a sense of horror. He put down his pitcher and taking a big and rough piece of wood threw it at the water trough making a clattering sound. The log

did not hit the snake, out of horror, but his lower part which was still outside the hole shook and in a flash twisting and writhing, it disappeared in the dark hole of the wall in front. I was standing there all along in the utter silence of the noon and looking at the hole with great attraction.

Lines 63—65. Regretted it—felt sorry for having thrown a log of wood at the snake. *Paltry, vulgar and mean act.* It was an unworthy, trivial and at the same time rude behaviour on his part to have acted like that. As a man of sensitive feelings he intensely disliked his action and felt ashamed of himself. **The voices of education**—felt a disgust for the kind of education that he had received which prompted him to such a violent attempt and which, unfortunately is allowed among men of education. **Accursed**--despicable What an education which teaches us to kill God's creatures even when they are unoffending?

Explanation. Immediately I felt sorry for having thrown that log of wood at the snake. I realized that my action was extremely mean and humiliating and shocking to refined feelings. I hated myself and the education which encouraged such deeds and prompts persons to kill unoffending creatures. The behaviour of the snake was unexceptionable whereas that of the poet meant an unprovoked fatal attack.

Lines 66—70. And I thought of the albatross—the poet was immediately reminded of the story of the albatross. It is a large, long-winged, web-footed sea-bird of remarkable powers of flight, found abundantly in the southern ocean, particularly near the Cape of Good Hope. The reference is to the albatross in Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" which is largely built on the old belief that to kill an albatross brought ill-luck to a ship. So here the

attempt to kill another animal, the snake out of superstitious dread, brings to the poet's mind the thought of the albatross, whose life was fortunate to man but whose killing destroyed them. The poet fears that some evil will befall him. **My snake**—his feeling of repentance turns into that of love. **Again like a king**—formerly the poet compared the snake to a god so dignified were his movements, and when he attempted to kill him the snake disappeared with 'undignified haste.' But now again the creature appears to the poet majestic and royal. **Uncrowned in the underworld**—in his hole the snake remains lying shrivelled and folded but it is only in the open air that he can raise up his hood and appear in his true beauty and majesty. **Due to be crowned again**—only if he returned back to the poet he would be treated with greater respect.

Explanation. I was reminded of the albatross in Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" whose death brought so much disaster on the ship and its crew. I was afraid that a similar calamity may not befall me for having made an attempt on the life of the snake. Now I imagined the snake a king who passing his days in exile and obscurity in the darkness of the hole and who should be brought to earth and restored to glory and power.

Lines 71—74. Missed my chance—could not show proper courtesy and failing to realize his greatness was unequal to the occasion of his visit. **One of the lords of life**—the poet has already compared the snake to a god and then to a king. As the lion is the lord of beasts, the serpent is also the lord among reptiles. **I have something to expiate**—I have to repent over an unworthy deed or sin. **A pettiness**—that fault which I have to atone for is meanness in me. The poet in his mood of repentance calls the

snake 'the lord of life' and himself a man who stopped to a mean act.

Explanation. The poet says that in this way he proved himself unequal to the occasion of the visit of one of the lords among living creatures. He insulted the lord of reptiles by hurling a log at him. He can now repent over the meanness of his action though he would very much wish that the snake could return once again to him and he atoned for his fault into and beg forgiveness.

HAROLD MONRO

21. EVERY THING.

Life and Work.—Harold Edward Monro, English poet, critic and authologist—his own description of himself being “author, publisher, editor, bookseller”—was born in Brussels, Belgium, on March 14, 1879, the son of Edward William Monro. Like Stevenson he was the son and the grandson of an engineer. He was educated abroad, at a ‘dame’ school in Wells, Somerset, and at the Radby Grammar School, in Abingdon, Berkshire, where he was considered dull and stupid. In 1898 he entered Caius College, Cambridge. Later he spent a few years on the continent learning to speak French, German and Italian fluently.

He published a volume of poetry in 1906, and two volumes in 1907, but his fame was not established until 1911. The same year he established the Poetry Society and the Poetry Review. He began many periodicals of high standard and wrote several books. After a long illness Monro died at a nursing home in Broadstairs, on the coast of Kent, near Margate, on Wednesday March 16, 1932, two days after his fifty-third birthday.

His two fold aims in life were poetry and the spirit of fraternity among creators of poetry. He succeeded in both.

Harold Monro published his first volume of poems in 1906. His other important works include *Judas* (1908); *Before Dawn: Poems and Impressions* (1911); *Children of Love* (1914); *Trees* (1916); *Strange Meetings* (1917); *Real Property* (1922); *The Earth for*

Sale (1928); *The Winter Solstice* (1928); *Elm Angel* (1930); *Collected Poems* (1933).

His prose works include *For a Voluntary Nobility* (1907); *The Chronicles of a Pilgrimage: Paris to Milan on foot* (1909); *The Evolution of the Soul* (1917); *Some Contemporary Poets* (1920); *One Day Awake*; *A Modern Morality* (1922).

As a Poet.—The best poetry of Monro is of fine texture and subtle perfume, moreover it is individual in its thought and form. There is, however, traditional manner also. There is independence but not isolation. Monro has an unappeasable questioning spirit. With certain qualifications his poetry may be characterized in a word 'religious'. The spiritual element compels attention in two ways. It is a dominant impulse, supplying themes which occur early and late and often; and the manner of its expression reveals a link with the past generation.

His early poetry shows signs of descent from the Victorians. There is for instance, classic theme treated in the romantic manner. There is another quality in *A Song at Dawn* which reminds one of *Dover Beach*, but there is in the former a greater detachment. The Victorian mourns the decay of faith, but Monro seeks to question the reality behind it. There are several poems in 'Before Dawn' which pursue the same quest notably 'God', 'Two visions', 'The Last Abbot', the last of which is engaged upon the thought of the universal soul.

As regards the metrical features of Monro's poetry all aim at gaining the greatest possible freedom within the laws of English versification. Rhyme is no longer merely decorative and tyrannical. It is an instrument of potential range and power used with restraint by an artist. In 'Great City' we have a

form determined by the thought which is to be expressed, the phasses, through which it passes, the nature and strength of the emotion, the ebb and flow of the poetic impulse. There is rhythm but not of the monotonous regularity. The whole attitude is modern which tends to truth of expression.

In the representative works of the poet the intellectual realism which comes from an acute sense of fact is clearly operative. He conforms to the religion of reality—belief in the sanctity and beauty and value of the real world—for spiritual mastery. The two elements are fused in later poems through a realistic technique.

Substance of the Poem.—It is seldom that we think of the various articles of daily use and the service they render us silently and meekly. If things were to cease their function our life would become intolerable and burdensome. Man speaks to man and sometimes tries to put himself in communion with nature too, but does he think of the articles of daily use. He never expresses his feeling of gratefulness towards them supposing they were to conspire together and go on strike what should happen to us. If the bed, the candle, the kettle crockery and cutlery were to refuse their services we would immediately realize their usefulness to us.

The poet imagines that these articles have become displeased with because he has proved ungrateful to them and does not care to hear all they have to say. They stop their work and have their places expressing discontent. The poet immediately realizes his mistake in ignoring their feelings and discovers a kinship with them. After all there is not much between him and these inarticulate objects. They are also like him subject to ultimate annihilation as he is subject to death. Imagine them to possess

feelings and understanding and man would be bound to them with the ties of sympathy and enjoy their companionship. Nay more, he will be ashamed of having any time considered himself superior to them. Man with all his knowledge, and advancement has yet to learn the lesson of unselfish service from things which silently minister to his wants.

Remarks on the Poem.—In 'The Passing of the Farmer' by Robert Graves we were given an imaginary picture of what our domestic animals think of us. They certainly have a right to form their opinion of the treatment we give to them. The remarks of the animals, as imagined by the poet, are not very flattering to us. Harold Monro goes a step further and tries to link us in sympathy and understanding with the common articles of our daily use. They are inanimate no doubt, but do we ever think of the great services they render to us? Let us enlarge our relationship with these things also and we can feel their sympathy. What we learn is that our sympathy should be extended beyond the living beings and by imagining a kind of kinship between us and our articles we gain spiritually and morally. Thus Monro goes a step further than Wordsworth who conceived only nature as a sentient being inspiring and directing us.

Harold Monro is in a humorous vein but the real significance of the poem lies in its spiritual tone. If Wordsworth found something to learn from the meanest flower Harold Monro hears a voice from every article around him and is grateful to them all—

*"You call me from myself to recognize
Companionship in your unselfish eyes."*

EVERY THING.

Notes.

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Lines 1—14. Since man articulate—gifted with the power of speech. **Mechanical**—knowing the use of tools, implements and machines. **Improvidently wise**—thoughtlessly wise, because so often he abuses his knowledge and shows lack of prudence in the proper use of his wisdom. **Servant of Fate**—but in spite of all his wisdom and machines he is controlled by a power above him. **He has not understood**—in spite of his knowledge. **Foreign conversations**—because conversation is carried on in a language not his own. **Small delightful creatures**—the little things of his daily use. **Followed him behind**—which are almost always with him and without which he cannot do. **The sympathetic call**—that feeling of serviceableness never expressed in words. **Crockery**—vessels formed of baked clay or China. **Cutlery**—edged or cutting instruments in general. **Teraphim**—originally idols or an idol used in divination among the Hebrews. **Those kind happiness**—his crockery and cutlery are like peaceful images of Hebrew gods always ready to help him and promote his domestic happiness. Imagine how troublesome our life would become if we were deprived of crockery and cutlery. **Overbearing fool**—man is proud, haughty and foolish because he fails to acknowledge gratefully the services rendered by these articles. **What is he coming to ?**—man is proud of his civilization, and good manners and yet fails to acknowledge his indebtedness to those articles constantly serving him and without which his life would be full of worries. Is he not becoming an ungrateful creature ?

Explanation. The poet complains that man with his gift of speech and mechanical skill and a little too much of wisdom has shown a woeful lack of the feeling of gratefulness towards the domestic articles like crockery, cutlery, stool and door which have been rendering silent services to him. Does he ever cease to realize what his life would be without them? His crockery and cutlery are verily like the household idols of the Hebrews, ministering to his wants and quickly helping him in so many ways. The poet imagines the articles to have a sympathetic feeling and a language of their own which man has never learnt to understand. He is an ungrateful fellow.

Lines 15—30. Listen to the talk of these—imagine them to be articulate and try to understand what they may have to say. **Honest they are**—they never cheat us. They ungrudgingly render all service expected of them. **I often heard**—the poet imagines that he heard the sighs of the bed and similarly the loud cries of the candle because though they served their master he never thankfully acknowledged their services. **Then bowed**—took leave politely. **A smoky argument**—when a lighted candle is blown out it gives out a streak of smoke. The poet imagines the smoke as an expression of vague discontent.

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Puffed breath—the steam coming out of the boiling kettle is compared to a feeler of an insect. **Tentacle**—a thread-like organ of certain insects for feeling or motion. **I don't know why**—the kettle sees no reason why it should boil water for him. **I boil too slow**—this is how he thanks the kettle. **Sukie, dear**—an address of endearment as if the kettle was a housewife named Susanna. 'Sukie' is diminutive

of Susan or Susanna, a Christian name for women. **I squandar**.....**kitchen fire**—the kettle regrets its quiet submissiveness in serving the master by boiling his water while it would like to do something else.

Explanation. If the articles of our daily use could only think and express their ideas they would certainly complain of our behaviour towards them because we do not even thank them for their services. The poet in his imagination thanks that he hears the creaking bed murmuring and the candle when put out, after its light is not required, gloomily grumbling at their master's behaviour. The kettle hisses out to complain that the master instead of thanking it for boiling his water generally grows impatient. He never treats it like a housewife and the kettle has every reason to regret its submissiveness and ordeal on fire when it would like to do something else.

Lines 31—45. **Rattled and tumbled down**—made a clattering sound and fell down. **Bumping**—striking against the ground. **I can fall by myself**—at least it needs no help. **Coax and flatter**—humour and please by sweet words. **The lean and poise of gravitable land**—the way in which the attraction of the earth operates pulling objects and leave them stationary. **Raucous**—hoarse. **Twisted itself**.....**about**—fell down rotating with a whirling motion and lost its shape. **Grins at me**—laughs at me in derision with distorted features. **Impetuous**—rushing out with violence. The gas coming out of its jet under a great pressure. **Irascibly**—with great anger and provocation. **Flare and fret**—burn with an unsteady light. **Wheezing**—breathing with a hissing sound. **Epileptic**—ceased with convulsions as a patient of epilepsy.

Explanation. Now the articles conspire to go on a strike and thus teach a lesson to their master. The copper basin decides to fall down from its place on the shelf. It makes a clattering sound and comes down on the floor twisting and rolling and then lies stationary. It said to itself that the attraction of the earth was quite enough to help it to perform such a feat unaided by anybody. To tumble down it did not require to be hamoured by anybody. The poet saw the basin lying distorted and twisted on the floor as if it was making fun of him. Then came the turn of the gas jet. It behaved in a convulsive manner like a patient of epilepsy, and burning with an unsteady and flickering flame. It made a hissing sound and went out leaving the poet steeped in darkness to sleep.

Lines 46—59. **Rafters**—beams supporting the ceiling of the building. **Joist**—the timbers to which the boards of a floor or the laths of a ceiling are nailed. **Putty**—an oxide of tin, or of lead and tin used in polishing glass. It is also a cement used in glazing windows.

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Shoves—pushes and drives out by continuous pressure. **Independent**—because no more submissive. Along with other articles it is also in revolt against the master. **Ruminating**—cheering the end. The clock which evenly went on swinging its pendulum. **Rock**—move violently to and fro. **Warning the**
night—intimating to the poet that it was the hour of night when he should return. **Strikes the dead hour**—strikes the midnight hour. **Tumbles to the work again**—the clock again resumes its position and continues ticking as before.

Explanation. Here is a picture of the house when it is imagined that all things are in revolt against their master. The beams supporting the ceiling creak as if they would give way. An empty almirah flung its door open; a plank of the floor breaks loose from its position and falls near his leg from behind. Soot came down in heap from the chimney and putty which kept the glass-panes in position creaked and fell down. A piece of paper pushed another to drive it out of the basket. The pencil point broke down in a rebellious spirit, and the clock which was ticking regularly suddenly shook with violence, as if warning the poet of the approach of midnight struck hours, and then again resumed its position and began to tick as usual. The poet wants to show that we never think for a moment what should happen if the household articles were to behave in an erratic manner.

Lines 60—67. **You do me**—the poet is happy that the erratic behaviour of things reminds him of. **Praise your ways**—he appreciates their strange and peculiar abnormal movements. **You call me unselfish eyes**—the poet was selfish and self-centred and did not know that there was a kinship between him and these articles which served him so unselfishly. His sense of superiority over them did not allow him to see that there was something equally common to him and those things. **I want you dear acquaintances**—giving up his superior airs he desires to understand them better. **I pass you over**—in his pride he did not care for them. **Throw your days**—she would feel happy to surround himself with their grounds and find it a relief to hear them while busy in his work. **I'll do wrong**—his behaviour would no more be overbearing or haughty.

Explanation. The poet immediately realized that the erratic and strange behaviour of things around

him was meant to make him realize his true relation with them. He had been naughty and proud and had not noticed that between his selfish nature and their self-denying service there was some sort of kinship. Now he felt that he stood closely related to them and would no more treat them with disdain or pride. He would be happy to hear their sounds even when he was busy and treat them considerately.

Lines 68—77. Purr for me, Sukie, like a faithful cat—the poet addressing the kettle affectionately as if it were a living thing asks it to make the low murmuring sound like a pet cat. 'Sukie' as already remarked is the diminutive of 'Sosanuat' a female name. **Remaining friends**—give up the spirit of rebellion against me as I have understood your feeling and feel grateful to you. **Your touch week**—there is a growing feeling of sympathy between the man and his things **Mutual happiness**—the man concedes that they too have a sympathetic feeling and can feel happy in establishing relations. **To go toward less**—after all there is a sin; tarity in one thing. Man and his things have all to die and disappear. They are both impermanent. **There is dissimilarity**—there is no great difference between the animate and inanimate objects as they are all subject to death and annihilation. **Not much to choose**—as there is no superior or inferior to the other. **The purposes of you and me**—both are designed for the same end. **Eventual Rubbish Heap, and mine**—he would turn into dust in his grave and they too would be thrown away on scrap heap when they are no more serviceable.

Explanation. The poet realizes that he has no right to consider himself superior to his inanimate articles as both of them have to go the same way of death and dissolution. The idea of a common fate

strengthens in his mind the feeling of fellowship with them which grows from day to day. His kettle, boots, hat all are now dear to him and he feels that they also like pet animals are moved by mutual sympathy. He revel not only in their services but also in the music they make and he would hear it with a sympathetic understanding. The poet feels happy to be one like them.

ROBERT GRAVES.

22. A BALLAD OF NURSERY RHYME.

For the Life and Work of the poet see page 100 of the Notes.

Remarks on the Poem.—In every country there are popular nursery rhymes which children learn and hear with great interest. The story of children, birds and beasts mentioning new places, excite the imagination of children and are much appreciated by them. But we do not know who was the first man that composed such verses. That great friend of children is unknown to us. These verses have been supplemented and modified by alteration and addition again by unknown persons. Like great traditions they are handed down from generations to generation and we can never know how they began. Their constant repetitions have smoothed the verses and made them sweeter and easier to pronounce.

There have been innumerable learned poets who wrote verses and who thought that they had attained perfection in their art. They knew rules of prosody tried to write faultless verses and believed that they had exhausted all tropics making it impossible for any other poet to show originality or imagination. Their theories of diction have been mercilessly rejected and their works have gone out of fashion. They fail to charm us and their artificiality is patent. But the popular nursery rhymes which were most likely, compared by uneducated people who never claimed to be poet or learned men have survived and will be remembered by children generations after generation. These composers are unknown but their work has

proved a source of immense delight to children and God will bless them for their service.

These nursery rhymes are like wild berries, sweet and fragrant; whereas the artificial poetry cultivated assiduously by learned poets is like the berries grown in a garden. The latter is forgotten with the change of fashion while the former remains an eternal possession of children whom it never fails to charm.

A BALLAD OF NURSERY RHYME.

Notes.

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Stanzas 1 to 3. **Strawberry**—a delicious and fragrant fruit. **Plump**—fat and rounded. **Woodland vine**—the woody climbing plant that produces grapes. But here the word 'vine' means any fruit producing plant in its wild condition. **Trickling**—gently flowing. **Confounding taste with scent**—as delicious as fragrant.

Explanation. The poet's main argument is that the fruits cultivated in a garden may be sweet, juicy and full of marrow but those which grow in a wild state are sweeter. They are as sweet and delicious as they are fragrant, and in order to enjoy them you have only to taste them as they are with sugar or anything else to sweeten them. You do not need even a spoon to relish their taste. Such a delicious fruit is better than a heap of fruits grown in a garden.

Stanzas 4 and 5. **May sudden . . . pen**—may the unreasonable and self-willed pen soon break and receive its due punishment. **That old . . . minds of men**—which old fashioned poets of weak imagination use to poison the minds of men and give them a false sense of values. **Blasphemers**—these poets are impious

and abuse poetry. **To hold caught . . . thought**—who believe it possible to express in their verbose verse all that can possibly man can imagine. They think that have all possible poetic ideas in their mind and that they can express them. **Tell nothing . . . to think** tell no ideas are left for any one to think or express in poetry.

Explanation The poet strongly condemns all those poets who think that they have exhausted all poetic ideas and no original ideas can be hit upon by others and that their poetry has attained perfection. May such poets suffer the proper punishment soon and they may cease to produce verses any longer. They are old-fashioned and mislead their readers.

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Stanza 6. But may all time—the poet prays for an obscure poet that heavenly peace may be his. For the old-fashioned poets he has different sentiments. **Tom**—an imaginary name of an uneducated boy tending geese.

Explanation. The poet strongly condemned the old-fashioned poets for their verbosity, poetic tricks and that their verse was the last work in that art. But he has the highest praise for a boy who tended geese and spontaneously composed the first nursery rhyme.

Stanza 7, 8 and 9. Using the sun for clock—there is nothing artificial or conventional about the boy. He marks time by the position of the sun in the sky. **Whiled flock**—he was idly passing his time while looking after his geese. **The famous lines**—so well-known among children. **Jumping Joan, Dan Fox and Greedy Kate**—these are the ordinary themes of nursery rhymes. Stories of girls like Joan and Kate and those animals usually found in-

teresting to children and versified for them. 'Dan' or 'daun' is a Middle English word meaning 'lord' and in mediæval times was applied humorously to animals in beast-stories and poems. **Rhyming birds**—stories of birds and beasts told in verse. **Spain, Scotland, Babylon**—mentioning these places in nursery rhymes. **That sister Kate words**—so that the little girl Kate may learn new words. 'Tom' is imagined to be the composor of the first nursery rhyme for his little sister Kate, so that she may learn words and names. **To tell to John**—Kate may in her turn teach those rhymes to her younger brother John who is still a small child and cannot yet walk.

Explanation. The first nursery rhyme was composed by Tom and while he was tending his geese and marking time with the help of the sun. When idling away his time he took up a slab of slate and scribbled on it some verses describing simple beast and birds stories mentioning different countrees also, so that his younger sister Kate may learn names from those times and afterwards teach the same to her younger brother John who was then a toddler.

Stanzas 10—11. Who could pat—she would not learn the rhymes at the right time and place. **New beauty that**—with the result that she altered the original rhyme while learning it, and thus improved it too. **She down**—not only did she improve the verses but added some more to her brother's. **God's blessing Kate**—may God bless her for her improving the rhymes and adding to them.

Explanation. Kate would not learn her brother's nursery rhyme properly with the result that by the time she knew it by heart she had altered it and made it more beautiful. Then she added some

verses of her own making and thus deserved the blessing of God because she was instrumental in making other children happy.

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Stanzas 12 to 16. With jolly glee he shook—John was happy to learn those verses and while repeating them he would shake his body. **Like pebbles brook**—by repetition the lines became easy to pronounce and its words became as smooth as the pebbles become rounded and smooth in the following brook when Tom tended his geese. **Sprawled at ease**—dying at ease with the body stretched comfortably. **Stone and state**—which were used in composing the first verses. Nobody knows who composed the first nursery rhyme and when. **Though runs**—even the brook has dried up but the rhyme remains. **False philosophy**—wrong principles. Here the reference may be to the absurd theories of diction in poetry. **Growing old**—going out of fashion. **Fades scorn**—is contemptuously rejected.

Explanation. The little boy John was happy to learn those verses and delightly rocked his body when he recited them. By repetition the verses became smooth and easy to pronounce as pebbles in a running brook become rounded and polished by constant friction. Now these verses became a possession of little children, generation after generation, and were repeated by them with pleasure while they were warming themselves in winter lying comfortably in front of the hearth or when in summer they were enjoining the shade of trees. The first composer Tom is forgotten and so his little sister and brother; even the brook has dried up, but the rhymes are still there, no matter if they have considerably changed. False theories of poetic diction

have been rejected with scorn and much that was supposed to be good poetry is conveniently forgotten but the simple nursery rhymes remain for ever, a possession of children. Just as the fruits in a garden cease to grow when the garden turns into waste in course of time, and yet the wild berries continue to grow and retain their fragrance and sweet taste, so do we find the works of once acknowledged poets completely forgotten but the rhymes of an uneducated boy spontaneously composed remain with children for ever.

J. C. SQUIRE

28. THE BIRDS

Life and Work.—John Collings Squire, English poet, parodist, politician, critic, editor and anthologist was born on April 2, 1884, the son of John Square. The 'Collings' he derives from his mother's maiden name. He was educated at Blundell's school. From there he went to St. John's College, Cambridge, after his graduation from Cambridge he worked for a short time in the Press Gallery of the House of Commons, and then went into publishing and journalism. Under the pennance of Solomon Eagle Squire became a frequent contributor to the *New Statesman* of which he was the literary editor in 1913. In 1918 he entered politics and again in 1924 to contest the seats for the Cambridge University division and for the combined district of Brentford and Chiswick, but the was unsuccessful.

In 1919 Squire founded the *London Mercury*. In 1921 he paid a visit to the United States America and his impressions were not favourable.

As a poet he began by translating Bandelaire. As a parodist he is one of the best. As an anthologist he has been versatile and prolific. In the field of Drama he has almost always worked in collaboration with others.

J. C. Squire is a prolific and versatile writer. His poetry includes *Poems and Bandelaire Flowers* (1909); *The Three Hills and Other Poems* (1913), *Twelve Poems* (1916); *The Survival of the Fittest and Other Poems* (1916), *The Lady of Malud and Other Poems* (1917); *Poems* (1918); *The Birds and Other*

Poems (1919); *The Moon* (1920); *American Poems and Others* (1923); *A new Song of the Bishop of London and the City Churches* (1924).

As a parodist he is matchless. His parodies include *Imaginary Speeches and other Parodies in Prose and Verse* (1912); *Tricks of the Trade* (1917); and *Collected Parodies* (1921).

He has to his credit a biography of *William the Silent* (1912), and short stories *Outside Eden* published only last year. In criticism also his contribution is remarkable, *Socialism and Art* (1907); *Books in General* (1918); *Life and Letters* (1920); *Essays on Poetry* (1921); and *The Collected Poems of James Elroy Flecker* (1928). In fiction *The Grub Street Nights Entertainments* (1924) deserves to be mentioned.

As a Poet.—J. C. Squire was once a jester but a seer as well. He was a censor as well as a fun maker. His jesting was a correction, his satire a purge, and his laughter had the tonic properties of a comic spirit. He liked to chaff the other poets. He parodied both the living and the dead. He displayed a keen sense of the ridiculous and so his parodies were good fun. He found pleasure in all manner of fooling. The blasphemous vision of the poet Gray composing his 'Elegy' among the "lewd fore-fathers", in the spoon River cemetery; the delicate distilling of inanity out of "Little Drops of Water" of Sir Rabindra Nath Tagore, the affectionate banker of Mr. W. H. Davies, and the parodies of Masefield are the various manifestations of that spirit. His parodies are more than the manner of the one parodied. It is a criticism of form and spirit both. He has, however, a tender heart for the poets. The war left its indelible mark on J. C. Squire. The poet survived but the jester was killed.

*For half of us are dead,
And half have lost their youth,
And our hearts are scarred by many griefs
That only age should know."*

His best poems are those in which there is the fusion of thought and feeling. The thought out of which they grow is often metaphysical engaged with the riddle of the universe, but the metaphysics is individual. In *The Three Hills* the idea of change and impermanence occupies the poet and the glow of feeling has wrought it into a lovely image. "Crepuscular" shows the eternal struggle of matter and spirit in a twilight mood of melancholy and weariness. Emotional poetry without any reflection is rare in the poet. The subtlety of mind expresses itself even in parody. But he is gaining mastery of form.

Substance of the Poem.—Scientists have been able to tell us the various stages through which the earth passed before life could be supported on it. They also tell us that man was not the first living creature who came into existence before other forms of life. Millions and millions of years passed before the earth, undergoing silent and slow changes, assumed its present shape. The progress of mankind too has been slow and gradual covering a period which is difficult to imagine. The poet briefly touches upon the various ages passed before man attained his present civilization. Man has undoubtedly made marvellous progress since the time when he was a cave-dweller and no better than an animal. We are filled with sense of awe and wonder when we think of what man was and what he has achieved now promising progress in the future which we cannot possibly imagine today. But to the poet man's progress and the panorama of his life in the world

stretching to the most distant ages in the past does not appear so wonderful as the fact that the various species of birds existed long before man came into existence. Not that alone but their methods of making nests and their structures have remained perfectly the same through all these ages. Man has an instinct for progress which urges him on to effect improvement in his mode of living, but birds prompted by one instinct have made no changes or improvements in the construction of their nests. The birds of one species know to build only one type of nest and there can be no variation of the type. Sea-birds and their behaviour has also continued the same. There is no change in them but man has constantly to seek and find new and improved methods. He is guided by reason, and accumulated experience of ages whereas the birds are prompted by an instinct which suggests no change at all to them.

Remarks on the Poem.—It is one idea that runs through the poem—the progress of man and the changes brought about by him in the world contrasted with the instinct of birds and their ‘dumb tradition’ of ‘one learned rite’. This remarkable contrast has prompted the poet to weave his fancy round it. In less than twenty lines he has vividly suggested the great natural forces which worked through ages to change the face of the world and also the change brought about by man’s toil and genius over long periods of time. Then there is a wonderful array of the names of birds. It is doubtful if we know so many names of birds in our own language. But it is clear that the poet knows names and has observed those birds and their nests also with a keen eye.

More than description we admire the reflective

mood of the poet. Metaphysical themes interest him and here he treats of a particular riddle of the universe. In the poem there is a fusion of thought and feeling with the facts observed by scientists.

THE BIRDS

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Lines 1—6. Within mankind's duration—in the period since the human race has come into existence upon this earth. **Khephren and Ninus**—gods of the ancient Egyptians. **Lived but yesterday**—the time when they lived cannot be called the remote past. They are not antiquities. **Asia had no name**—the continent of Asia had not been given a name. **Till man was old**—till a long time after the human race came into existence. **And long gold**—long after the age of iron or metals had begun. **Æons**—ages or series of ages extending over a very long period of time. **When the first corn was planted**—before man took to cultivation and his nomadic life came to an end. **Since first granted**—since man could speak and develop a language for communication.

Explanation. The human race has been in existence upon the earth since long ages. As compared to that period the oldest historical record or fact is as recent as if it happened only yesterday. The gods of the ancient Egyptians cannot be rightly called ancient when we think of the time when man was found in the world. A long time after he had existed and had passed through the iron age the continent of Asia was given a name. Millions and millions of years had passed before he learnt cultivation or developed his speech and had a language.

Lines 7—12. **Climates slowly swung**—climates varied from time to time. **Fanning wide zones to heat and cold**—the extreme temperatures obtaining in that period and affecting very large areas. **And long after age**—the soil of huge areas gradually sinking down in level turned continents into oceans. **And seas after age**—and those vast stretches which were once under water gradually became dry, as the water in endless ages dried up. **Interminably**—without termination or limit. **And the last monsters died**—the frightful animals of the prehistoric age became extinct, making it possible for man and small animals to live.

Explanation. Even that remote ancient age when the surface of the earth was undergoing great changes, when continents were appearing from under water and the vast open areas were sinking to turn into oceans and extreme climates prevailed man was in existence upon the earth. These changes took millions and millions of years, and it was not till the huge and gigantic animals had become extinct that man could live upon the earth.

Lines 13—16. **Earth wore another face**—the gradual changes occurring in millions of years quite altered the surface of the earth. **O since that prime time**—beginning from that period to this day man has achieved marvellous things. Age after age bear witness to all that man has been able to accomplish. At first the changes upon the face of the earth were brought about by the forces of nature and then man with his own skill and labour has marked all these ages with his own achievements. **Hammering roads**—by learning the use of various instruments invented by him man has been able to perfect means of communication over and even under the ground. **Multiform abodes**—the nests of birds are of

the same type as they were from the beginning of the creation but it is man who has built houses of countless designs according to his needs, since he left the cave and began to build houses.

Explanation. The forces of nature changed the face of the whole earth. And then man also brought wonderful changes and his achievements mark these long ages from the beginning of the time that he came into existence here. He invented instruments and by their use built roads and underground tunnels, ships, temples and houses of all kinds and designs.

Lines 17—20. For his body's appetites—to satisfy his bodily wants such as food, clothing and housing. His toils have conquered soils—there is hardly any part of the world which man has not laid under contribution to satisfy his bodily needs. **A language for his heart—**man has found ways to express his ideas and sentiments as nicely and accurately as possible.

Explanation. Man has conquered nature to satisfy his bodily needs and there is hardly any part of the world which by his toil has not been laid under contribution for the satisfaction of his wants. But it is not for his body alone that man has worked. Literature, poetry and the fine arts are other means which he has invented to give expression to his innermost feelings and sentiments and at the same time to satisfy his aesthetic sense.

Lines 21—24. Never at rest tired—man is never satisfied with his achievements. He is constantly trying to improve the conditions of life. **Insatiate wanderer—**he is always endeavouring to discover new things and new methods. The 'divine discontent' is at the root of all his progress. **Marvellously fired—**

man's enthusiasm for progress can never be chilled. His dauntless spirit is ever urging him to improve things.

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Most grandly where—his instinct for progress is so great and compelling that he has no time to think where his progress will take him. It is like building a house raising its structure to dizzy height without carings to know where it will end. **Arch**—form into an arch.

Explanation. The progressive principle in man never allows him any rest. He is never satisfied with achievement and never calls half to his search for further conquests in the realm of knowledge and practical affairs. His zeal is marvellous and he has no time to think where his endless progress will ultimately land him.

Lines 25—36. And yet—in spite of the marvellous achievements of man. **Than all that change**—brought about by human efforts. **Lovely and sweet tears**—all that man has achieved and accomplished is pleasing to the eye and the mind and it touches our hearts so deeply that we are moved to tears. **Man's chronicled years**—historic time and prehistoric of which no records exist. **Unguessable beyond**—that period even prior to the prehistoric which we cannot even imagine or can form a picture of. **Weaving dry flags**—the nest has been made of dry leaves and stems of water-flags. 'Flag' is a name for many plants with sword-shaped leaves mostly growing in moist places. **Into a beaten-floor**—ground carefully levelled. **The one sure product love**—the nest is the product of its skill which knows nothing else to make. **Sure product**—the nest is perfect of its type. **Only lore**—only skill that it possesses. **Low on a ledge**—on ridge

near the edge of the water **Shadowed**—overhung with bushes or trees. **As Nature taught her**—prompted by instinct. **Scarlet bill**—beak of red colour.

Explanation. The poet was struck by the idea of man's progress made through ages. The marvellous change brought about by man's constant effort is undoubtedly beautiful and touching. We are moved to tears even when we contemplate all that man has done in historic and prehistoric ages and even before that period. But the poet was more struck one spring when he saw a water-hen making its nest just above the edge of a pond at a quiet place properly levelled and protected by overhanging bushes. The nest was made of dry water-flags and was perfect of its type, the hen being prompted to make it by instinct. It knows nothing else to make and the nest is of the same type which the species makes. It is from the water side that the hen brought leaves and twigs in its red beak and arranged them properly at the selected place.

Lines 37—62. O let your wheel backward—picture the past and let your imagination show it vividly to you. **The great wheel**—of time. **Until Troy unburn**—before the city of Troy was burnt and it existed with all its glory. An ancient city in Asia Minor famous in classic Grecian legends as the capital of Priam. In the great Trojan war it was destroyed. **And then unbuild**—think of the time when Troy was not even built. **Seven Troys below rise out of death**—two generations ago, Schliemann dug up the hill of Hissarlik, where he believed Troy to have stood. He found remains of many cities, one under the other, and one of them burnt. He believed the burnt one to be the Troy of Homer, and the seven Troys under it to be earlier cities whose history must have run back many hundred years earlier still. **Dwindle and out-**

flow—people migrate and the city left depopulated. **None has yet there**—when there was no trace of the city because it had not been founded. **Back, ever back**—push your imagination to times even earlier than the foundation of Troy. **Our birds still crossed the air**—however remote past the period in history may be but there is no doubt that birds existed then. **Myriad changing generations**—countless generations coming one after another. **Unchanged**—it is a remarkable fact that different species of birds have different kinds of nests but the species have never changed its type of nest. **Known inhabitations**—the nests in which they were hatched were exactly similar to those which they make in their turn. **Atlantis**—a mythical island of which Plato speaks in the *Phædrus* as having existed nine hundred years earlier than Solon. **Our lark**—the same species of bird which we now call lark. **Some hollow in the grass**—the skylark builds its nest on the ground under some thicket. **Old soft hoof-print**—where some animal had left its footprint, leaving a hollow on the ground which the lark utilized for its nest. **Tussock**—a tuft of grass or twigs. **Wood-pigeon**—the cushat or ring-dove.

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Sunset coloured shafts—the branches of pine trees coloured by the rays of the setting sun. **Rooks**—a species of crows. **Their villages**—their colonies or cluster of nests. **Twiggy rafts**—the nests of rooks are called 'villages' and so the twigs composing them are called 'rafts' as if for supporting roofs. **Where elms grew then**—we cannot easily locate where elms grew then but they did grow. **Thumbling tit**—one of various small birds, a pipit, tomlit or litmouse. **Perky**—trim and proud. **Wren**—a species of birds having a slender, slightly curved and painted bill, the wings very short

and rounded, the tail short and carried erect, the legs slender and rather long. **Popped through**—looked out of their nests. **Cosy balls**—the comfortable nests round in shape. **Blackbird**—a species of thrush of a black colour. **Lined with moss**—coated with moss from within. **High built walls**—the nest is built protected with high sides. **A round mud cottage**—the nest of the thrush resemble a cottage as the nest is round and earth is used in its structure. **Thrush**—a genus of birds including the throistle, the song-thrush or mavis of Europe. **Untidy sparrow's**—the nest of the sparrow is not finished in an orderly manner; straws hang down from it. **Skimming**—brushing the surface lightly. **Fork tailed**—tail divided in the middle and looking bifurcated. **Man first was**—in the earliest period of man's existence. **Marten**—a small bird of the swallow kind. 'Marten' in the text seems to be a misprint for 'marten'. The latter is a bird and the former a kind of destructive weasel much prized for its fur. The poet is talking of birds. **Some human shelter crane**—did not they seek some protection near the cranes of the uncivilized man. **Stow**—arrange; place. **His cave**—when man was a cave-dweller. **Dry tight cups of clay**—their nests looking like cups. **Wiseheads**—the poet calls the birds wise.

Explanation. The poet wants the reader to recall the remote past and picture it before his mind's eye. Let him imagine the period when Troy was not burnt and seven cities on the same site had not been built one after another. Still further back and let him imagine the time when Troy was not founded at all and go back to the pre-historic times. The birds which we know, were still there. Though generations after generations has passed away one after another the birds and their nests of the same type were still to be found on the earth. A million years

before Atlantis came into existence the lark built its nest on the ground in the tufts of grass in small hollows made by the hoofs of an animal. The wood-pigeon laid its white smooth eggs, as now, in high pines the boughs of which are coloured by the setting sun. The rooks had their clusters on elm trees where-ever they might have been growing. The little tit and the proud wren had their small ball-like comfortable nests from which they peeped out. The blackbird also had its nest, like the one we see now, with its high walls and its inner side covered with moss. The nest of the thrush was also the same, resembling a mud cottage; and the sparrow, as careless as ever, had its untidy nest and straws hanging from it. It is quite conceivable that martins with their bifurcated tails were there lightly brushing the air in flying when man was in his primitive state, and we may also imagine that these birds made their nests and peeped out of them in early morning hours from their nests built just above the caves of primitive men.

Lines 63—80. **Yes**—similarly. **Daw**—a bird of the crow kind ; jackdaw. **Curlew**—one of the wading-birds having a very long slender bill and legs, and a short tail. **Hern**—a large screaming water-fowl, with long legs and neck. The same as 'heron.' **Kingfisher**—a bird with a very brilliant plumage feeding on fish. **Mallard**—a drake ; a common duck in its wild state. **Water-rail**—a common rail of Europe. The rail is a genus of wading birds with a harsh cry. **Tern**—a long-winged aquatic fowl allied to the gull. **Chaffinch**—a little song-bird of the finch family. **Greenfinch**—a bird of the finch family of a green colour, slightly mixed with grey and brown. **Warbler**—a singing-bird. Nightingale, redbreast, stonechat, wheatear, whitethroat reed-

warbler, are all warbling birds. **Stonechat**—one of the most common of the British birds; also called stonechatter and stoneclink. **Ruff**—a bird belonging to suadpiper family. **Pied**—spotted or coloured. **Wagtail**—any bird like pipits or titlarks which constantly wag their tails. **Robin**—a well-known and widely spread singing bird with a reddish-orange breast, also called robin-redbreast. **Fly-catcher**—a small bird, so called from its catching flies while on the wing. **Chough**—a kind of jackdaw which frequents rocky places on the sea-coast. **Missel-thrush**—the largest of the European thrushes supposed to be fond of the berries of the mistleto. **Magpie**—a chattering bird, of a genus allied to the crow, with pied or coloured feathers. **Sparrow-hawk**—a genus of long-legged, short-winged falcons, like the goshawks but smaller. **Jay**—a bird of crow family with gay plumage. **In this year's way**—exactly in the same manner and style as they are building this year. **Blotches**—spots on the skin. **Ledge**—a ridge or shelf of rocks. **Cleft**—a crack or fissure. **Tangle**—a confused group or mass of things. **Gulls**—a web-footed sea fowl. **Swoop**—descend with a sweep. **Hover**—to remain aloft flapping the wings. **Recover**—rise again suddenly after coming down low.

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Fretted—the waves violently struck against the rocks. The sea seemed to be chafed by the rocks against which the waves broke. **Silhouetted**—shaded or dark outline brought to view. 'Silhouette' is a shadow outline of the human figure or profile filled in of a dark colour. Such shadow-portraits are called after the name of Etienne de Silhouette (1709—67), a French minister whose pastime was to make them. **Cormorants**—a genus of web-footed sea-birds of great voracity.

Explanation. In the preceding lines the poet imagined the remote past when man came first into existence and even earlier ages and found that some birds had their nests of the same type as they have now. In these lines he mentions many more birds and says that they built their nests exactly in the same manner and style as they have built this year. In this respect time has made no change. If one were to go to the cliffs of Rame today and take a walk there one would find the same scene of sea-birds as the first man saw there. On the ledge would be seen the same rusty red nests of gulls and grey green nests of cormorants. The gulls would be seen floating and flying in the same manner today as they did in ages past. And similarly the orderly rows of motionless pipe-necked cormorants would also be seen like dark pictures against the sky and their blue eggs under them.

Lines 81—88. Delicate chain—continuity of a practice and habit coming down since ages unbroken and uninterrupted. **Dumb tradition**—habits and practices of birds handed down from long ages. 'Dumb' because of birds and also because unrecorded. **From what far darkness fetched**—coming down unbroken and unmodified from the earliest time. **Each little architect**—each nest-building bird. **With its one design**—every species has its own style of nest which never varies in the minutest detail. **Perpetual**—structure permanently fixed. **Right in stuff and line**—using the same material and giving it the same form. **Ministrant**—bird taking care of its eggs and serving its young ones. **Who knows one thing**—the only skill it possesses is to build its nest. **One learned rite**—nest-building requiring particular skill. **To celebrate the spring**—at the mating time. **These are unchanging** **explore**—the bird's

methods of building nests at the mating time in spring, their structure and form have ever remained exactly the same. They are neither improved nor modified ; but man has constantly to seek and find and improve his modes of living and go on making them better to serve his purpose.

Explanation. Since the beginning of the creation an unbroken line of tradition has continued among birds and each species builds its nest according to an eternally fixed design and of the same material. This is the only skill that a bird possesses and it uses it in the mating season of spring in order to lay eggs and take care of its young ones. The permanent and unchanging methods of birds are in direct contrast with that of man, who urged by the desire of improvement, goes on seeking and finding new methods and introduces them for his benefit.

SIR WILLIAM WATSON

24. RETROGRESSION.

Life and Work.—William Watson, English poet was born on August 2, 1858 at Birley-in-Wharfedale, Yorkshire, and was brought up and educated at Liverpool. He published in 1880 his first book *The Prince's Quest* a poem which showed the influence of Keats and Tennyson. It was followed in 1884 by *Epigrams of Art, Life and Nature*. These, however, attracted no special attention, but when in 1890 he issued his *Wordsworth's Grave* it was felt that a new poet had arisen. The poem showed his true greatness, and it obtained for him a place in the front rank of the new generation of poets. In this poem he struck the meditative note of Matthew Arnold. For a few years his genius remained at a much higher level than that of any of his contemporaries, and much that he wrote after *Wordsworth's Grave* attained a high level. But the wave of scientific rationalism touched him coldly and chilled his poetic energy. *The Hope of the World* is as hopeless as it could be for the world and the poet's future. His subsequent volumes show a lamentable descent in quality, and his book of war poems, *The Man Who Saw* is a pathetic sequel to his earlier work. Some war poems are undoubtedly and deserved the praise which they once enjoyed. But the book on the whole is beyond the pale of literature.

Of his numerous works the most remarkable are, *Excursions in Criticism* (1893); *Odes and Other Poems* (1894); *The Eloping Angels* (1893); *Lacrymae Musarum* (1893); *One Father of the Forest* (1895); *The Purple*

East (1896), *Sonnets on the American question*; *Collected Poems* (1903); *For England* (1903); *New Poems* (1909); *A Hundred Poems* (1922) and *Poems Brief and New* (1925).

Sir William Watson has been in receipt of a Civil List Pension of £ 100 a year since 1895. He was knighted in 1917.

Sir William Watson as a Poet.—Sir William's poetry is neither lyrical nor dramatic. It is highly contemplative and occasionally lyrical. In his 'Apologia' he speaks of the ardour and fire other than that of Eros and Aphrodite, but his verse shows none of these two qualities. Except in his political verse there is more thought than passion. His poetry shows traces of romantic influence, but it mainly recalls the earlier, classical period in its epigrammatic phrasing and latinized diction. The distinction and clarity of his style and the dignity of his movement place William Watson in the classical tradition.

Sir William Watson's genius first found expression in his *Epigrams of Art, Life and Nature*. This with *The Prince's Quest* gave evidence of a genuine poetical faculty combined with a fine command of reserved and dignified English. In *Wordsworth's Grave* we find something of that intellectual passion for the commanding word and the inevitable epithet, which belonged to Milton; and the lines move slowly as to a solemn music. In *Lacrymae Musarum* written after Tennyson's, he combines imagery with sustained thought. There is no isolated terseness but he returns to it in *In Laleham Churchyard* and *The Tomb of Burns*.

Sir William Watson is at his best in his elegies, odes, and quasi-philosophical poems, and sonnets and here he deserves comparison with Wordsworth. But

there is a difference. Wordsworth's love of the commonplace is not to be found in Watson. General conceptions rather than everyday trifles engage his muse. But his poetry like Wordsworth's is "emotion recollected in tranquillity". If, however, his genius is not lyrical he has written a few short lyrics of supreme beauty. His later poems show little passion. They are arid. It is said that he has not passion enough for poetry. It is incorrect. The lyric of mind is as real as of human passion hope or disillusion.

He stands apart in contemporary poetry because he set up his own ideal of form and content. The return to classic restraint and dignity was hardly in the ascendent when he adopted it, but he followed it with firm conviction. He has written slowly and carefully and did not publish a line which failed to satisfy his own ideals of artistic form and the traditions of great poetry. Later he strayed into rhetoric. "We do not look in his work for colour, warmth and lyric passion ; for the emotion of his poetry is abstract and intellectual, of the mind, not of the heart."—Harold Williams

"The predominant quality in William Watson's best poetry is its grave splendour and dignity of utterance. We are captured by its noble imagery, marched in happy chains to sonorous music. Listen to the conclusion of *The Father of the Forest*. In the whole English poetry there is nothing finer, in music, in imagery, in emotional chastity. Such poetry is born among the classics by virtue of its manner. It is sure of immortality."—

Substance of the Poem.—The poet regretfully complains of the falling literary standard in English poetry. The Englishman may justly be proud of his sturdy race, world-wide commerce, and his biggest

fleet of ships, but it has to be confessed that his intellectual progress is not keeping pace with his material advancement. Lovers of poetry are substantially decreasing in number. The modern Englishman cares less and less for the grand literary heritage which has been left to him by his brilliant predecessors. He fails to appreciate the grandeur of his literature and does not realize its uplifting influence on the human mind. He does not appreciate the service of literature in broadening our mind and opening vistas of the infinite to our view. He is not troubled for a moment by the thought that the classics of his country is unapproachable by the creative efforts of the best of his contemporaries.

The poet in his bitterness advises an aspiring young poet to produce nothing really beautiful as it would not be appreciated. Worse than the neglect of the glorious literature of the past is the deterioration of the taste of the Englishman of today. He cannot appreciate good poetry and his ear has lost the charm of melody and harmony in expression. The common place, prosaic language appeals to him and he dislikes dignity of expression and thought. And yet he a countryman of Milton, is not ashamed of his depraved taste.

The real spirit of poetry is absent now. The substance is gone and its place has been taken by outward embellishments, and meaningless verbiage. The want of refinement in life reflects itself in popular vulgar poetry.

An aspiring poet must prepare himself for disappointment. Even if he happens to possess a happy vein of thought and can turn a good verse like the old masters, he must expect no recognition of his genius. Then the author gives two examples, of Dryden and Gray, to show how they perfected their art,

and what precious lessons they have taught the writers of today. Dryden was born after the glorious period of literature in the Elizabethan age. He is distinguished for his vigour, correctness and command over words. His classical learning taught him the value of restraint in art. Gray also gave a new life to phrases by their appropriate use and wrote with remarkable lucidity. He may be lacking in originality but his form is perfect. In his famous poem "The Bard" he vividly describes the tragic figures of kings and shows how the unfortunate complexities of events and characters made them miserable.

Remarks on the Poem.—It is certain that the main argument of the poem would be questioned by many a reader of modern poetry. That the taste for poetry has declined and these are not the times in which poetry and its devotees can thrive can easily be disproved. It is quite a different question whether in particular qualities, modern poetry is rich or poor. But there is no lack of poetic energy. Sir William Watson sees a general decline in the quality of poetry and modern tastes. He complains of the neglect of the splendid heritage. One thing may be conceded that an effort to attain an elevated style or a nice regard for controlling metre are not the things which seriously trouble a poet today.

The poem is undoubtedly noteworthy for its intellectual tone and sustained thought. Sir William Watson in his "Wordsworth's Grave" and "Lacrymae Musarum" showed a remarkable gift of giving terse poetic form to critical and literary opinions. Prose is the proper language of criticism. But Sir William has a happy knack of expressing critical opinions in beautiful epithets and telling phrases. The description of the Elizabethan age in this poem is not only satisfying but brief and highly

poetic. Similarly the brief reference to the classical idea of restraint in art finds a felicitous expression. It was no easy task to describe the common faults of style in poetic form and does it in a charming and picturesque manner—

*"Striving her lax form to bestar
With all crude ornaments that are."*

The last couplet, however, is a master-stroke though the poet has wandered away from the main topic—

*With doom-dark brows to come and go,
Trailing the folds of gorgeous woe.*

RETROGRESSION.

Notes.

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Lines 1—18. Retrogression—going backward, or falling from better to worse. **Our daughters**..... **grace**—the English girls are beautiful and have the grace of flowers in spring. **In strength**..... **...apace**—the English youths grow up strong and healthy. **Wax apace**—grow quickly; acquire a developed physique. **Our cities teem**—population in cities is growing fast. **Our commerce**..... **tides**—the British manufacturers are carried to distant lands in big liners and ships which easily defy storms. **Fawning tides**—the sea has been so completely mastered that behaves in a servile manner to the British ships. **This our stronghold**—the sea-girt British isles protected from all sides. **The North Wind's**..... **children**—the Angles and Saxons and, later, Danes are meant, since they were sea nomads and came from the north. **Like wild..**..... **sprung**—settled down on the soil of the

sea like birds of water. **Built their young**—settled down on the soil of the islands. **The fleet of peace**—ships carrying merchandise. **Pour fruitage and vintage**—bring to England fruits, and grapes and wine. **Ocean gate**—sea-port or haven.

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Long barricadoed against Fate—the coast line of the British Isles is irregular and broken and so there are innumerable natural harbours, and then the islands being sea-girt were fortified for long against enemies. 'Barricado' is the old form of the 'barricade'. **We are served Antipodes**—the most distant parts of the world supply our necessities. **Antipodes**—those living on the other side of the globe, and whose feet are thus opposite to ours; the region just opposite to one's own. **Lo, everywhere brain**—but it is a matter of regret that everywhere the brain is starved and intellectual deficiency among the English people is a marked feature. **Dire as a bondman's chain**—as calamitous as the fetters of a slave. **Laws that crush**—repressive laws which impede the progress of the people and deprive them of legitimate freedom of action. **Creeds that blind**—false religious beliefs and superstitions which cloud our reason. **The leanness mind**—undeveloped mental powers; starved and undeveloped intellectual powers.

Explanation. The poet describes the greatness of the English race but complains of its neglect of intellectual development. The girls are beautiful, the youths are strong and sturdy, the British trade is world-wide and exports and imports from all parts of the world in British shipping give evidence of prosperity; natural harbours and the protection offered by the sea vouchsafe safety from the aggression of other nations; there is no part of the world which does not trade with England and supply its wants—and yet the

people are intellectual deficient. Their minds are undeveloped, as if they were crushed by oppressive laws or superstitious faiths which would impede their intellectual advancement. The poet's regret is that the people be prosperous and advanced in so many ways but intellectually they are deficient.

Lines 19—30. **The fewer do they grow who know**—the number of persons possessing this knowledge is growing smaller. **The great things greatly said and sung**—the noble thoughts in noble language; the great literature of their country. **In this heroic English tongue**—the English language is undoubtedly the richest in the world. It absorbs alien words and coins new ones without the least hesitation. **This speech wizardry**—the language may not be so elegant and polished as French or Italian but its literature is rich with the most wonderful creations of human imaginative power. **Rough-wrought key**—the language is compared to a key, not very polished in itself, but opening the 'Kings Treasuries', in the words of Ruskin, for us. **Palaces of wizardry**—the most marvellous literary productions of creative agencies. **And many a despair**—literary masterpieces, the creations of their poetic powers which it is possible for us to produce. **Fabric hung in the air**—works of imagination or poetic creations. **Father's glory and despair**—which are standing monuments of our ancestor's intellectual attainments and which no efforts on our part can reproduce. **That firmer stands stone**—they are monuments which last longer than those of stone and keep their memories fresh for ever. **Vigil lone**—keeping watch in loneliness. **Wisdom viewed infinitude**—wise persons can get glimpses of the infinity, thus transporting them beyond the limited world of daily life.

Explanation. The poet regrets to find the English

gradually neglecting their own language and the priceless things it offers. In the rich language the greatest works of imagination and of the highest literary value exist. They are the everlasting monuments of those great minds whose creations baffle all our powers to imitate. Such geniuses who have enriched English literature are not born today. They have left behind for us knowledge and wisdom which, if we care to acquire, will transport beyond the limited interests of daily life and allow us glimpses of the infinite and thus expand our soul and broaden our vision. The poet's main idea is that the Englishman of today is not only deficient in intellectual attainments as compared to his ancestors but he does not value the noble literature left behind by them, and which when properly studied can make his life sublime.

Lines 31—38. **And shouldst . . . say**—first of all it is doubtful that any writer of today has anything original in his mind worth saying; and supposing he has a good thought which he can turn into verse better than in prose. **Sing than say**—which can be better expressed in poetic form than in prose. **Shun**—that is the poet's advice. Do not write poetry even when you think that poetic form expresses your ideas better than prose. **If thou . . . heard**—if you care that people should read what you write do not compose poetry. **The comely phrase**—poetic expressions of literary value. **The well-born word**—the appropriate Anglo-Saxon word which by its long life and use has acquired fine shades of meaning and suggestive value. **As for their . . . meet**—satisfying the reader's vulgar taste. **The lose-lipped . . . street**—the inelegant and prosaic language of the vulgar and uneducated people. **Loosed lipped lingo**—the dialect of uneducated persons who have no sense

of the music of words and their appropriateness. They murder the natural music or words for which they have no ear and which they cannot even correctly pronounce. **A language Milton's song**—Sir William Watson seems to maintain that the language of poetry is different from the commonplace language of everyday use. There was an interesting controversy on the language of poetry between Wordsworth and Coleridge. Sir William is sorry to find that commonplace or vulgar language is supposed to be good enough for poetry today. It is a matter of shame for Englishmen who claim Milton as one of their greatest poets, and entitle him the 'organ-voice of England', should allow such deterioration in their language of poetry. He was 'mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies' and people put so little value on the quality of dignity of language.

Explanation. The poet advises a writer who may be aspiring to express his thoughts in poetic form to prefer prose to verse. Because if he wrote poetry people would never read his works, and even in verse, if cared to please them, he should be prosaic and never try to impart dignity to his language. It would be a waste of effort on his part to use words rich with suggestion, or elegant expressions. They would not be appreciated. What a pity that Milton's countrymen today have such depraved tastes that the careless and vulgar speech is supposed to be good enough for poetry now.

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Lines 39—48. Don—assume or put on. **Vesture doubly vile**—dress or robe quite worthless and mean. **The beaded and bespangled style**—beads are small balls of glass, amber etc. strung in a series to form a necklace, and spangles, are small thin plates or bosses of shining metal. Beads and spangles are used for ornamenta-

tion by people of vulgar tastes. The poet means the crude ornaments of style which delight the vulgar people and offend the refined taste. **Diction**—is the choice of words; manner of expressing; style. **O'er-loaded**—with too many purple patches. The writer does not observe proper restraint with the result there is deliberate attempt at 'beautiful writing'. **Impure**—without any command of language. Words not used in their proper meanings. **Thought lost** **garniture**—the main idea lost in the profusion of useless words; verbosity without sense. **Garniture**—that which embellishes or garnishes; ornament. **Ev'n to her** **hem**—the whole garment, even to its hem, is grandly decorated. **Huddling** **that are**—the want of true poetic feeling and energy is concealed under mere verbiage and every kind of ornamentation is used in profession to pander to the vulgar taste of people devoid of refined feelings. **Lax form**—just as a thin, lean person has no beauty of figure and in order to conceal his poor physique he is dressed in rich gaudy dress. **An empty and** **strife**—the whole attempt is a dismal failure. **Vulgar in Letters as in Life**—as there is no refinement of feelings and sentiments in life so is their verse. Poetry mirrors our life and as we are devoid of taste and refinement our poetry also reflects the same qualities or defets in us.

Explanation. One who aspires to write poetry for the people and desires to appeal to them through verse, should pander to their vulgar taste and uncultured sense of beauty. They like a style full of false ornamentations substances and verbiage. They cannot appreciate the true restraint of an artist. They mistake the form for the their tastes are vulgar like their life and they lack the ear for true poetry. They can be pleased by a work of art which is as low in aesthetic quality as their own life is.

Tines 49—80. Nor look for praise—do not expect any recognition from them. **Save here and** **rare**—the man who appreciates poetry and knows the value of true art is becoming rarer. Love of poetry and generous criticism are now things of the past. **If thou beget pain**—if the poet is lucky enough to hit upon a beautiful idea and he is able to turn into good verse. **The ordered strain**—poetic energy and imagination controlled by rhyme. **That preadventure famed**—which would have done credit to the old poets who were masters in the craft of versification and possessed the fire of genius. **Dryden**—John Dryden (1631—1700) one of the most vigorous and prolific of English poets and writers and a popular dramatist. He excelled in satire, and drew some powerful pictures of the statesmen of his day. His blank verse was almost perfect and vigorous. **The athlete large and strong**—Dryden was a great satirist and wrote on controversial subjects in a vigorous style. **Lord of the nerve and sinew of the song**—he was a master of poetry full of vigour and energy. **A hewer plasticity**—just as a craftsman cuts stone or diamond and shapes it for his purpose so Dryden, as a master of language, knew how to shape words to his purpose and compress in verse what seemed impossible to do. **Plasticity**—the state or quality which allows a substance to be moulded. **Who tone live**—as a miner takes out iron from an underground mine and then fashions it into a rail or line, so Dryden in his deep classical learning discovered material which he turned into perfect English verse. **Entrails of the mine**—classical poetry. **Iron line**—correct verse. **Born beside overbloom**—though he was born soon after the Elizabethan period in literature when the finest poetry was produced and a large

number of high class poets flourished. **Hauhgty tomb**—because though the period had come to a close it still challanged its successor to be as glorious as it had been. **Rank time of overbloom**—the glorious period of poetic creation specially lyric and drama. **When poets burned**—when great geniuses among poets were born and each produced exquisite poetry. In no other period was there such a brilliant galaxy of poets as we find in the Elizabethan period. **From their purple surfeit**—the Elizabethan period was romantic in spirit and was marked for its freedom from the restraint of classical models. But this led to excesses in poetic art, and in the time of Dryden reaction set in against these excesses. So the ‘purple surfeit’ means exuberance of poetic energy landing to excesses for want of restraint. **Learned**—Dryden was one of these who, followed classical models and emphasized the necessity of restraint in art.

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The truth in Hellas seen so plain—the ancient classical writers and poet of Greece so clearly recognized. **That the art of arts is to refrain**—the true greatness of a work of art lies not so much in displaying skill and overloading with details as in the subtle power of suggestion. The true art lies in concealment and an aesthetic suppression and not so much in the spirit of abandon and profusion ornamentation. The true spirit of classical poetry lies in its restraint and conformity to certain well-known principles of art. **Or Gray**—take another example of the English poet, Thomas Gray (1716—1771), whose “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” is one of the most beautiful in the language. **Who on worn thoughts**—originality is not the chief quality of Gray’s poetry. His subject matter of poetry and its treatment follow the prevailing fashion. **Conferred**

that second youth—but the commonplace ideas in his poetry are treated in an artistic manner. His form is superior to subject matter. **The perfect word**—his poetry gives evidence of his fine taste for choosing the appropriate word in poetry there is a satisfying word which may be called the inevitable. It so well fits the real meaning of the poet that no other word can do. **The elected and predestined phrase**—the choice phrase which seemed particularly significant for the purpose. **That had lain bound**—which had been in his mind waiting for an appropriate use. **When once set free**—once brought in use by Gray. **To wear at last immortal pellucidity**—Gray would use his phrases in such a manner that their inner meaning would become clear for ever as if they had become transparently clear. **That most mighty Ode**—“The Bard.” See this famous poem in Palgrave’s ‘Golden Treasury.’ **Like a pageant glowed**—described in vivid colours and historical figures one after another. **Called up anew Kings**—brought before our mind’s eye living pictures of kings dead and gone long ago. **With doom-dark brows**—the tragedy of their lives clearly marked on their faces. **Trailing the folds of gorgeous woe**—involved in the intricacies of tragic events which us usually trouble monarchs and the nobility.

Explanation. No poet should hope to be appreciated or receive recognition at the hands of the modern reader. Even if he is so fortunate as to show signs of genius and produce something worthy of the old masters, he must know that there will be very few to recognize his genius. Dryden, the most vigorous of English poets, knew how to mould words. His classical learning enriched his mind and taught him correctness of versification. He was born after the end of the glorious Elizabethan period which

inspired so many great poets, by the romantic spirit of abandon. Their excesses taught Dryden the value of restraint in art which was fully recognized by the classical writers of ancient Greece. Similarly Gray was also a careful writer for whom the significance of words and phrases and their appropriate use was a matter of importance. He may have lacked originality but in his phraseology he is unique and lucidity is his marked quality. In his great poem 'The Bard' he has given vivid pictures of kings and has shown how their tragic lives, involved in troubles and difficulties, made them miserable in this world.

D. H. LAWRENCE.

25. WHEN I WENT TO THE CIRCUS.

For the Life and Work of the poet see pages 283—84 the Notes.

Substance of the Poem.—The poet describes in this poem his visit to a circus and the various feats which he saw there, and also gives us his impression of the audience and their mood.

On reaching the big tent of the circus he found people anxiously waiting for performance to begin. He saw their anxious faces and felt the smell of the menagerie. The first item was of monkeys riding on horses. Children liked it but not very much. Then came dogs who jumped through hoops and geese which marched with a funny flutter. This the children seemed to like more than the first item of monkeys. Then there was an atmosphere of suspense and in the house. A young girl danced on a light rope and balanced herself in various postures with the help of a parasole. This feat was much better appreciated but not without some nervousness because the girl was risking her safety. The trapeze man always frightened the audience when he displayed his exercises of violently rocking swings jumping from one to another like a shooting star. It was with some relief that this item came to an end, as the people were nervous for the safety of the man. Huge elephants contorted their bulky bodies in many ways and excited the wonder of the audience by the way twisted their limbs and performed feats difficult for such big animals. The show of horses was liked better as there was nothing they performed which conveyed

an impression of turshing and contorting limbs in difficult positions.

But the subdued manner in which the audience cheered these performances clearly showed that they liked cinema shows better. In circus the applause seemed to have been extorted from the audience and was not as hearty and spontaneous as we hear in circus. The reason was that modern people like the representation of character and personality more than mere physical feats however risky and difficult they may be. The cinema shows bring out the character of man which the mechanical performances in a circus never can do. Then they do not like the taming of animals only for the sake of a short performance. Children have another reason to grudge. They see grown up persons performing feats which children alone should do. Childish movements can be appreciated only in children. Grown up persons behaving like children and dressed like children tread on the ground which by nature belongs to younger folk. This was another reason why the applause of the audience including in the circus was not so enthusiastic as in a cinema.

Remarks on the Poem.—D.H. Lawrence has treated here an unusual subject which does not seem easily to tend itself to poetic treatment. He not only describes the usual performances of a circus but adds a psychological interest in studying the impressions upon the mind of the audience. It is not easy to describe the feats without appearing funny. Lawrence is interesting but never funny. His lines seem to reflect difficulties which performers overcame by their skill. It is really creditable that a commonplace topic should have been so successfully treated. The poem in the beginning seems to have been designed for younger folk who would like to be amused by

hearing in verse-form what they actually saw at a circus. But immediately the feats are described, the poet seems to compare the interest created by each item and the underlying reasons for the applause won by it. He has tried to make a case for cinema and has told us the reason why we generally prefer it to a circus. Our sense of a highly developed civilization is flattered by a cinema show which attempts a psychological study of man; whereas our pride that we have left the uncivilized fate far behind, is hurt by a circus performance. The most interesting part of the poem is a glimpse in child psychology at the end of the poem. They should be delighted with the sight of performing wild animals obedient to man. All this does interest them but they cannot be happy to see their own function usurped by elderly people who have turned children's fame in a serious business of life. We have outgrown our child mentality and so circus cannot occupy the same place of impatience in our amusements as cinema does.

The poet, like an acrobat who uses the greatest economy of effort, has succeeded brilliantly in giving a time picture of performances in the fewest possible words.

WHEN I WENT TO THE CIRCUS.

Notes.

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Lines 1—5. **Pitched on the waste lot**—the tent of which was pitched on a piece of waste land. **Uneasy people**—due to their suspense and anxiety that the performances may not result in an accident or injury. **Frightened of the bare earth canvas**—though in the arena there were no wild beasts or acrobats performing. Even the tent and the arena caused an un-

easy feeling. **Smell of beasts**—coming from the menagerie. **Merely the smell of man**—in other shows man is the only performer.

Explanation. The poet here recalls the feelings of the audience at a circus before the performances commenced. One is the recollection of the peculiar smell of the menagerie and the other impression of the uneasy feeling of frightfulness even at the sight of the empty arenas and canvas walls of the tent.

Lines 6—14. **Wizened**—thin, lean and shrivelled. **Curly plump piebald ponies**—the ponies having wavy mane, fat, rounded and having spots and patches. **Children . . . cry**—we have to notice in this poem the psychological effects of various performances on children. Monkeys riding horses delighted them but not very much.

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Through hoops—passed through the circles of iron. **Turned somersaults**—leaps in which a person, but here dogs, turn with heels overhead. **Scuttled in**—moved with a quick mincing gait. **Ring**—arena. **To the sound of the whip**—as directed by the cracking whip of the master. **Doubled, and back**—suddenly changed their course and turned back. **Up-fluttering**—their feathers raised up. **Children suddenly shouted out**—the performances of the dogs and geese were more appreciated by children than those of monkeys on horseback. **Hush of fear**—silence and suspense due to fear.

Explanation. The first show in the circus was of grey thin monkeys riding fat ponies with curly manes and spotted skins. Children liked it but were not enthusiastic in its praise. They liked better dogs leaping and jumping through iron circles and the geese, directed by the whip, walking in a mincing

manner turning and departing with their plumes disturbed. Then they were again silent because they were afraid of expecting something more exciting to follow.

Lines 15—21. The tight-rope lady—the dancer on a tightly stretched rope. **Pink and blonde**—of fair complexion with light hair and blue eyes, wearing light coloured dress. **Nude-looking**—because putting on close-fitting dress. **Spangles**—small thin plate or boss of shining metal. **Footed cautiously rope**—walked on the tightly stretched rope balancing herself with great care. **Turned prettily**—turned her face in another direction with a graceful movement. **Spun round**—turn in all directions. **Lifted her hand**—kept standing on one foot. **Parasol**—a small umbrella used by the dancer to balance her body on the rope. **To another balance**—changed the position of her body. **Tripped round**—moved with short light steps. **Poised**—balanced. **Sank her handsome rope**—she gradually bent herself down and inclined her body on the rope in a sleeping posture. **Tilting her parasol**—raising one end of the umbrella. **Smiled at the cautious people**—she smiled at the audience who were watching the performance with anxiety and suspended breath fearing a mishap to the girl. **They cheered but nervously**—the spectators did admire the performance but they seemed to be relieved of the tension of the feeling they were experiencing while the girl was every moment exposing herself to danger.

Explanation. The next performance was by a young girl of blue eyes and hair in light pink coloured spangled dress. She danced on a tight rope. She cautiously walked on, turned back and wheeled all round. Then she kept standing with one foot on the rope, the other being held in her hand. Then she

balanced herself, with the help of her umbrella, in a different posture and gradually laid herself down on the rope as if she was sleeping. Getting up quickly and smartly moving her umbrella she smiled at the audience and thus concluded her show. The audience did admire the performance and cheered at its conclusion, but they seemed to have been relieved of their tension of feeling because while she was performing they were anxious at heart for her safety.

Lines 22—24. **The trapeze man**—the performer on a swing of one or more cross-bars used in gymnastic exercises. **Slim and beautiful**—with delicate limbs and pliant muscles. **Fish in the air**—his quick agile movements made without any exertion gave him the appearance of a fish moving freely in the air. **Swung great curves**—made violent motions on the swing. **Came down like a star**—like a shooting star with lightning rapidity he came down from the swing. **With hollow frightened applause**—the audience cheered him too but not without a feeling of frightfulness. They were happy that such a risky performance had concluded without injury to the performer.

Explanation. Then came the performance on the trapeze by a nimble delicate person whose movements may be likened to that of a fish in the air. His swings were very violent and he shot up like a star from dizzy heights. His performance was, no doubt, applauded but he frightened people more than he pleased them by his risky display. They felt a relief when it ended.

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Lines 25--30. **Loomed their curved bulk through the dusk**—the elephants looked bigger than their size in darkness. Their curved backs looked huge. **Taking strange postures**—contorted their limbs in strange and unusual manner. **Showing the . . . feet**—they would

hold up their reddish soles to view. **Curling their precious live trunks**—twisting their trunks the most useful and nimble part of their body. **Ammonites**—the fossil shell of an extinct genus of molluscs, so called because they resemble the horns on the statue of Jupiter Ammon, worshiped as a ram. **Soft slow precision**—moved slowly but without a faulty step. **Resent the mysterybeasts**—felt envious that animals managed their bulky bodies better than man could do.

Explanation. Then came the elephants, huge and dark, which with their huge backs, looked larger and more ponderous in the dim light. They twisted and contorted their bulky body assuming various postures and even showed their pink soles. They curved their trunks, the most active and useful part of their body into various shapes and the trunks appeared like the horns of rams or a spiral shell. Though they were ponderous and bulky yet they moved with slow, correct motion like a big ship about to anchor. The people appreciated their performance but their feeling of wonder was mingled with envy because in spite of their bulk they could better manage their body than men can do.

Lines 31—35. **Gay horses**—showy and lively ponies. **Swirling round**—sweeping along with a whirling motion. **Plaiting in a long line**—the horses were standing in a long row the head of one horse lying on the neck of another. It seemed as if the heads and necks were arranged in folds or braids. **They were happy**—there was no twisting or contorting of limbs in unnatural postures and horses were happy in their performances. **All the creature people**—the animals, the audience as well as the circus people enjoyed the performance.

Explanation. The feats of the horses were enjoy-

ed by all, even by the horses themselves. There were no attendant risks and so the people were care-free when watching the horses run with a whirling motion and then standing in a long row with the head of the one on the neck of another.

Lines 36—41. Compelled to wonder compelled to admire—all other animals excepting the horses and even the trapeze man simply extorted the admiration and applause of the audience by performing difficult and risky feats. There was no sense of ease in the minds of the people watching them. Fear of an accident or mishaps troubled their minds and therefore the show did not afford them unmitigated joy. **Bright rhythms of moving bodies**—precise and brilliant movements harmoniously performed. **Flickering human bodies**—the movements of the performers were like an unsteady flame. They were brightly dressed and performed with wonderful dexterity and nimbleness and so they are compared to an unsteady flame. **Flesh flamey**--flaming or bright bodies. **Tumbling down**—the clown who mimicks the chief performer and falls down headlong in his attempts, thus causing merriment to the audience. **They were not really happy**—for the reasons explained in notes above. **There was no gushing response**—the applause and cheers of the audience were neither heartfelt nor spontaneous there was no spirit of pure enjoyment as the attendant risks of the performances made them anxious. They admired their skill but prayed for for their safety at the same time. They watched the items with bated breath. **As there is at the film**—the outburst of applause care-free and spontaneous, as we have in cinema shows is not found in circuses.

Explanation. The poet says that the various performances by the animals and the acrobats simply extorted admiration and applause from the audience.

Precise and brilliant movements performed harmoniously by the trapeze man and the rope dancer their flaming bodies; mawellously nimble and dexterous in movements, were undoubtedly difficult to perform. Without courage such risky feats could not be performed by them and even the joker who cause merriement by his bedicrous feats was also undergoing some danger. But it is doubtful if the cheering and applauding audience was really happy, because vociferous and spontaneous cheers were not given them as are usually here in cinema houses. The reason was that the audience was afraid all the time of some injury or accident taking place. Their joy was mingled with anxiety for the safety of the acrobats.

Lines 42—44. When modern people—because the tastes have changed with the advance of civilization. Bloody and risky games do not appeal to refined people. The bull-fight in Spain, gladitorial performances are repulsive to men of sensitive feelings. **Carnal body**—fleshy human body. **Dauntless**—not to be frightened or discouraged. **Flickering gay**—quivering, sportive and merry.

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Playing among the elements neatly—performing feats in air, fire, or water. **Beyond competition**—which it is not possible for others to do. **And displaying no personality**—performing feats like a machine without bringing out the emotions, feelings and character of the performers. His deeds are not the outcome of his individuality or character. They simply show his physical skill without disclosing to us the kind of man he is. **Are repressed**—do not feel enthusiastic over it.

Explanation. Tastes have changed with the advance of civilization and people have become more

refined and sensitive. Those deeds and performances which only display physical skill and acrobatic feats of fearless and sportive persons in different elements, as water or air, do not much appeal to the audience now. The feats may defy competition and be quite impossible for others to perform yet we do not admire them much; on the other hand they chill our enthusiasm and admiration for such things. The reason is that now people desire to see the individuality or character of a person in what he does. Mere mechanical movements however correctly and skilfully performed are not appreciated much as they do not disclose character and are not the direct outcome of the man's personality.

Lines 45—48. Modern people feel disadvantage—the civilized man of today realizes his loss or deficiency. **They know they elements**—a civilized man is more or less like a hothouse plant who lives, protected from the elements. He has rendered himself unfit to bear the hardships to which an uncivilized man is constantly exposed. He has lost too the animal-like agility and physical fitness or alertness since he has begun to live in civilized condition. **They personalities**—he lacks physically but he has gained an individual character. He possesses an individuality which marks him from all other men. **That are best seen flat on the film**—and this individuality or personal character is better expressed in cinema shows than in a circus, though his actions are seen projected on a canvas screen. **Flat personalities in two dimensions**—the figures projected on the screen in a cinema have only length and breadth and no thickness. In a circus living personalities come before us, whereas in a cinema we see only pictures and only with two dimensions; and yet the pictures are interesting than the acrobats.

Imponderable and touchless—without any sensible weight and imperceptible to such. They are mese projected pictures which have no weight and cannot be touched.

Explanation. When we see the feats of a performer in a circus we are reminded of our loss or deficiency and this is not very flattering to us. With the advancement of our civilization we have lost some of our physical capacity and our bodies have become unfit when compared with those of practised acrobats or of uncivilized people. The civilized man has an individual character and he is not a mere man like any other human being. This personality is displayed in a cinema show by means of the projected pictures, and not in a circus where mechanical performances, independent of personality, are shown. In a circus we see living human beings performing and yet they do not bring out their characters, as the mere figures, of two dimensions, without any weight or susceptibility to touch, do in cinema. One reveals character though the representation is lifeless, and the other, through human beings, displays only mechanical skill.

Lines 49—52. They grudge weight of limbs—the audience murmur at and look upon with envy the gaily dressed performers moving their limbs with ease and grace, because they cannot perform such feats. **That flower in mere movement**—the performer gaily dressed and performing feats is like a flower in motion. But what purpose the movement serves and how does it relate itself to the character of the person? **The immediate**—only for the movement and for the purpose just before them. **Physical understanding beasts**—man and beasts jointly perform feats and they know very well their separate parts and have perfect co-operation.

But the relation is only physical and has no other significance. **They grudge themaltogether**—the audience have a feeling of envy at the circus life in general, because they are reminded of something that they cannot do.

Explanation. There is yet another reason why people do not like a circus and the life of performers in it. The acrobats, gaily dressed and moving their limbs with grace and ease appear to them like moving flowers. Men and beasts performing feats in perfect cooperation have only a physical relation for the moment and only for the purpose of the performance. It has no other significance whatsoever. This does not satisfy the feelings of the people. And because they are reminded of their own incapacity to perform similarly is another reason why they feel envious and cannot fully enjoy the feats.

Lines 53—55. The **strange**—because so different from what you find in other kinds of shows. **Almost frightened short of delight**—frantic cheers produced by the feelings of fear and delight mingled together. **Vaguely know**—they are too inexperienced to know it precisely. **How cheated they areflesh**—children feel that the gaily dressed performers are encroaching upon their exclusive night, because it is the privilege of children to make wild movements with their limbs and thus satisfy their animal spirits and find an outlet to their superfluous energy. Grown up men have something better to do, and not to behave like children.

Explanation. Then the occasional frantic cheers of children which are the outcome of mingled feeling of awe and delight, should not be mistaken as coming out of pure delight. Their cheers express a legitimate grievance though their feeling may be only vague and not fully realized. Children grudge

the encroachment by the performers on what they consider their birth-right. Why should grown up persons dress gaily like children, and why should they make wild movements which children have to do because of their superfluous energy? It is children who delight their elders by such fantastic movements, and surely it a travesty of things that grown up persons should act and behave like children for the latter's delight.

HERBERT TRENCH

26. SONG OF THE LARKS AT DAWN.

Life and Work.—Fredrick Herbert Trench Irish poet and playwright, was born at Avoncore, Cork, on November 12, 1865. He was educated at Haileybury and at Keble College, Oxford. He was elected a fellow of All Souls' College and from 1891 to 1908 was an examiner in the Board of Education. In 1908 he definitely began as a literary enthusiast and accepted the Directorship of Haymarket Theatre, London, and produced there *King Lear* and Maeterlink's *Blue Bird*. In 1901 was published his first volume of poems *Deirdre Wedded*. His poems include *New Poems* (1907); *Lyrics and Narrative Poems* (1911); *Ode from Italy in Time of War* (1915); *Poems with Fables in Prose* (1918) and a poetic play *Napoleon* (1919). He died on June 11, 1923. His collected works edited by H. Williams appeared in 1924.

As a poet.—Herbert Trench has been known to a small circle of readers. But he possesses beauty of melody, command of felicitous phrase, and high gifts of simple and sincere imagination. Art and the expression of life in art was his chief aim in life. His first poem *Deirdre Wedded* is weak in technique and shows the poet's fondness for double epithets. But it has other beauties, and fine imaginative phrasing. The next volume contains many noble poems, the best of which is *Appollo and the Seaman*. It reminds one of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* without the sense of derivation. The direct simplicity of its allegory, the sincerity of its mystic interpretation of life, the beauty of its imagery, and the music of

its verse are peculiarly attractive to the reader. Among his *New Poems* the ode "On Romney Marsh at Sunrise" and "Bitter Serenada" contain true emotion, which constitutes the distinctive mark of Trench's lyrical poetry.

Trench is not a prolific writer. He is not always careful in what he writes. But he writes with his eyes open. He was better than himself as the greater part of his poetry is not only imaginatively conceived but melodiously executed. "In Herbert Trench we recognize the scholar inspired with a love of art and a passion for poetry, a scholar and a poet who never loses touch with life and those philosophical questionings which knock throughout the generations at the heart of man. In *Apollo and the Seaman*, in the odes and in the short lyrics he is the poet of an optimistic faith and philosophy. It was his belief that: 'In alliance between the arts of Poetry and Music, and in the philosophic ideas they may together convey, lies much of promise for our civilization.' In the genius of Herbert Trench there was a mingling of adventurous romanticism, intuitive mysticism and reasoned philosophy comparable to the endowment of Coleridge. The mysticism of the Celt in his nature was balanced by an English level headedness; his vision of the world was almost equally pictorial and abstract, for his abstract ideas readily took the form of poetic allegory."—Harold Williams.

Substance of the Poem.—The poet is in Italy on the peak of Mt. Falterona from where gleams of both the coast of Italy are visible. It is very early in the morning and the multicoloured clouds and thunder are gradually disappearing before the light of the dawn. But at the same moment rising from the cliffs and valleys are heard the song of larks slowly rising to the sky. It is yet so dark that the

larks are not visible yet their songs like poems and hymns celebrating the glory of God are distinctly audible. They pour forth their sweet melody upon the earth and flood the whole place with their music. The morning stars humbled by such an exquisite melody disappear from the sky.

In the east now there is a halo of glory and the subdued golden light appears like a whirlwind. The larks soar higher and higher up in the ecstasy of their songs and are lost to view. They are happy in the sky far above the earth to which they return only because they have their nests on the ground.

The poet imagines these flying larks as if they were the prayers, sighs and expressions of grief rising from the earth to heaven. The world sends up its prayers to God, the Creator of all things, so that it may be freed from its bondage and restored to healthy activities for the good of mankind. The poet asks the cities and men to rise up and see the glorious beauties of the morning and hear the songs of the larks in the sky.

He goes further. Why should not the songs be allowed freely to go up to the highest heaven? He is anxious that they may transcend the dome of sky, pass unimpeded through the curtains of the morning, and rising from the earth may reach the abode of the gods.

The larks have reached the regions of the dawn before sunrise. They seem to be floating in the stream of dawn and are first to greet the rising sun and are in advance of the world. They are like poets, seeing the visions of future and make them the object of their songs. The music has now become inaudible but the ecstasy of the larks is as intense as before, whether we can hear them or not. They are 'drink-

ing light' at its fount and then become invisible. they are bright and pure like dew which is the essence of morning.

Our soul journeys on breath between life and death and continues its existence even after we cease to live. The flight and songs of the larks inspire the poet also and he sings forth in joy the glorious vision of future which at present exists only in his imagination.

Remarks on the Poem.—Herbert has deliberately chosen a subject for his poem which has been the theme of the two most famous poems in English. Wordsworth and Shelley treated the same topic from their own view points and thus gave two priceless gems to the readers of English Poetry. Herbert Trench shows distinct signs of Shelley's influence. Even where he echoes the sentiments of Shelley we are aware of his own individuality and uniqueness. His poem has its own lustre and does not shine with the borrowd light of his more illustrious predecessor. It required no small courage to have treated the same subject almost on similar lines and yet make fresh contribution to bird-poetry in English. The poet describes the flights of larks, the morning hour, the dawn, and other objects of nature in his own refreshing manner. His lines are not the subdued echoes of sentiments not his own. Stanza after stanza takes us into the sublime heights of true poetry and we, like his birds, feel transported to higher regions of thought where our selfish ideas of the world cannot pursue us. The poem rains 'adorations everywhere.' What a fine picture is here:—

*Earth seeds them up from hills
Her wishes small.*

Like Shelley, Herbert Trench is also sore at heart because the world is chained, and for him too the

larks are the symbols of liberty and better days for mankind. Picture after picture enthalls our imagination. The larks float into the 'swaying stream of dawn', 'they drink the virgin light' and give to the poet a message of hope and deliverance.

The last stanza is a fitting close and the poet thinks of man and his fate in life. Life may be transient but if we receive our inspiration from the larks we can also overcome our despondency and say—

*"Today we too are the winged songs of the morning
Today we will arise."*

SONG OF THE LARKS AT DAWN.

Notes.

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Stanza 1. Shepherds who at dawn— they have to go with their flocks very early in the morning. Others will be asked by the poet to wake up and admire certain objects of nature. **Falterona's peak Camaldoli—**Monte Falterona is a peak of the Tuscan Appenines almost overhanging Camaldoli, where is an ancient and famous monastery, in the neighbourhood of Florence. **Gleam both shores of Italy—**from this peak the Italian coast on the Adriatic Sea and that on the Ligurian Sea—about a hundred miles apart, may be seen shining. **Beyond forests and wilderness bleak—**if you look beyond wild and cheerless forests which divide the two coasts. **Fallen apart morning—**the threatening clouds on the eastern horizon have left a gap for the morning light. The idea is that the light of the dawn has broken asunder to dark clouds to make a way for itself.

Explanation. Very early in the morning the shepherds who drive their flocks to pastures and go to the summit of Mt. Falterona where its peak overhangs Camaldoli may catch a glimpse of both the coasts of Italy, if they look beyond the wild and cheerless forests. The distance between the coasts is about hundred miles, but the peak almost in the middle of the distant horizon have broken, as if to give passage to the light of the dawn. Then are watching the glorious dawn.

Stanza 2. **Heaven's troubled continents** are rifted—the multi-coloured clouds in the sky are compared to the continents on a map of the world. The clouds are broken. **Torn**--they are gradually disappearing like a retreating enemy. Light is pursuing them and have broken them by its shafts, the rays. **Troubled**—disturbed at dawn. **In their forest tents**,—from the mountain top the forests in the distance, from where thunders come and sometimes lightning is visible, appear as like an encampment of storm. **Still see the when aloft**—the sound of thunder is still heard though it is now subdued; and the lightning also is at times visibly above the forest trees. **Sullenly mourn**—the retreating thunders are yet making a dull sound. **From the gulfs born**—from abysses and heights music emanates. **Laggard**—lagging; slow; backward. **Mists of the morning**—in the morning the mist clears very slowly.

Explanation. The multi-coloured clouds, looking like continents, are broken at the approach of the dawn. The disturbed clouds are now gradually melting and yielding place to the dawn. The thunders and lightning are also departing, only dimly heard or and occasionally seen in the distance. At the same time a music is heard rising slowly, like the morn-

ing mist, from abysses and heights there. The poet asks men to look and hear that music.

Stanza 3. For scarce can eye ear's aware—it is yet so dark that men can see nothing but they can hear the music. 'Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight'.—Shelley. **Virginals** **exquisite**—excellent musical instrument of music. **Virginal**—a small rectangular spinet, without legs, having only one wire to a note. Called by this name because it was used by young girls. It was popular in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Here is meant light tinkling music such as virginals and larks alike produce. **Are raining from the air**—an music is coming down upon earth from the sky. 'Showers a rain of melody'—Shelley. **With sun and their delight**—the larks rise so high in the sky that they seem to be enjoying their songs with the sun and the moon which now appears without its lustre. **Adoration everywhere**—everywhere you hear the music of the larks coming down like a rain of melody in homage to God and for his divine worship. **Now listen and yield**—the stars also listen to this music and acknowledge its excellence. **The vanquished of the morning**—the stars lose their brightness in the morning and gradually become invisible. The poet imagines that the stars feel humbled at the excellence of the lark's music and depart from there.

Explanation. But if men were to look up to the sky they would not be able to see the larks as it is dark, yet they can hear the light tinkling music of the larks, as sweet as of virginals, showering its melody upon earth from the sky. The music is excellent and pervading everywhere is like the hymns sung in praise of God, and comes down from the highest altitude. The morning stars gradually dis-

appear, humbled by the excellence of the music which they cannot produce. Now man lift up their eyes towards the sky which rains forth the melody.

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Stanza 4. Eddy of golden dust—this is what men see in the east. There is a whirlwind of golden colour. The sky is splashed with gold. **Halo of rays**—a bright luminous circle of rays in the east. **Thrilling up, up**—the larks are rising on their wings while they are singing. “And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest”—Shelley. **They must die of must praise**—the larks are enjoying life and flying high up in the sky but this flight will make them ultimately disappear from our sight. **That is the earth sleeping place**—the lark has its nest on the ground in some thicket or bush. We are reminded of Wordsworth’s line in his *Skylark*—“True to the kindred points of heaven and home.” Shelley calls the bird “thou scorner of the ground”. **Rugged worlds**—rough and uneven tracts of open country. **Rockbound valleys of morning**—the poet mentions both time and place. Skylarks have their nests in valleys surrounded by cliffs and rocks and they rise from their nests in the morning. **Like mist**—the morning mist rises slowly from the earth towards the sky.

Explanation. The east presents the glorious sight of the dawn. The golden haze appears like a whirlwind and the rays have formed a halo, surrounding the sun which is not yet risen. The larks are rising from their nests on the ground, either in the valleys or rough tracts of open country, and they go up slowly on their wings as the morning mist does at daybreak. The Skylarks thrilled with the delight of their flight rise up only to disappear from our sight

and leave the world and their nests far below and their music inaudible from such heights.

Stanza 5. Earth sends them small— the larks rise from hills as if they were the prayers and wishes of the earth. **Her clouds of griefs—**they were like the sighs of the world going up to heaven. **Her wills to burst own thrall—**another comparison : the larks are like the desires of the earth to get freedom from its bondage or slavery. **To burn away what chains the soul—**to destroy all obstacles which enthrall the human soul like customs, conventions, etc. **Chills—**deprives the soul of its innate tendency to grow and develop. **In the God of all—**just as a prayer rises to heaven and God in his mercy destroys our sins which warp the soul, so the larks are like prayers of the world which when granted by its creator would free it from all those obstacles and chains which thwart its growth and development. Shelley also compares his Skylark and its song with a number of objects. See his stanzas 7 to 11. **Fount of all—the Creator. Open your gates—**it is morning and they must wake up. **Faint for morning—**looking dim before sunrise.

Explanation. The poet compares the rising larks flying in the sky to the prayers, wishes, sighs and griefs of the world which rise to the throne of God, the Creator. If the prayer is granted all its trouble would come to an end. The fetters which enthrall its soul would break away and the bondage which damps its ardour for liberty would vanish. The poet asks the cities, dim in the early dawn, to open their gates and the men to lift up their eyes and watch the larks in the sky and hear their songs.

Stanza 6. Pantheon—“The temple of ‘all the gods’ built in Rome by the Emperor Hadrian about

A. D. 120. It is notable for its immense dome, covering the whole temple. Here in the poem, the earth is felt to be the floor of a temple, the night sky its dome, and this imaginative picture is further developed by the 'threshold of the empyrean' (where the popular Greek religion believed the gods dwelt) and temple veils of the morning.' **Night's blue Pantheon**—the night is imagined to be the dome of the temple of gods and the earth its floor. We are reminded of Shelley's beautiful lines in *Adonais* where he compares life to a dome of many colours. **Thy dark roof-ring**—the dark sky at night which is like an enclosure obstructing the view of the beyond and confining the lark's songs within its dome. **Escaping poem**—the joyous song which would like to pierce through the dome of sky and reach the higher regions or heaven. **Pæan**—a song of triumph or any joyous song, especially sung in honour of Apollo. **Of tremblers on the wing**—the larks which flap their wings and sing while flying. **Unknown threshold of the empyrean**—far beyond and above the skies in heaven. **Threshold**—entrance; the place of entering. **Empyrean**—the heavens; the highest heaven, where the pure element of fire was supposed by the ancients to subsist. **Myriads soft**—countless beautiful and soft notes. **Give way before them**—let the music of the larks go up without any let or hindrance. **Temple-veils of the morning**—the beautiful colours of the morning sky are imagined as the curtains of the temple of which the floor is the earth and the sky its dome.

Explanation. The poet has already compared the songs of the larks to the prayers and sighs of the earth. Now he compares the earth to the floor of a temple and the sky to its dome and the eastern sky to the curtains decorating its wall. He prays that the songs of the larks may, transcending the sky and the

curtains, reach the highest heaven. The songs may go without any let or hindrance, far beyond the world of perceptions.

Stanza 7. They—the larks. **Ere the read**
 **strong**—the larks attain a great height before the rises and shines.

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Into that **of dawn**—the poet imagines the dawn to be a stream in which the larks, having attained a great height, are imagined to be floating. **Float along** **the future**—the larks are the first to greet the rising sun, and so they are ahead of the world in point of time. **For future** **with song**—those who sing—Skylarks are poets—live in a world of imagination which they hope time will make real. They are idealists and their ideals are woven into songs. **Who roof the** **song**—who flood the world with their sweet music and thus stir the hearts of men to nobler actions and generous impulses. **Open your** **eyes!**—behold the glorious sight of the larks in the morning.

Explanation. Before the red beams of the dawn turn into the white light of the sun the larks attain a great height. They are like floating things in the stream of the dawn. The larks are the first to greet the rising sun and so therefore so far as we are concerned they live in future and so do the poets who also sing of the time when their ideal would come true. They see glorious visions of the future and flood the world with their poetry or songs thus stirring the hearts of men to nobler actions. The poet desires the natural objects where his eyes to rejoice in the songs of the larks, and asks men to wake up and hear them.

Stanza 8. Hark! it grows **less**—the music has now become less distinct and audible.

But nothing guess—the music may have become less distinct but the ecstasy of the bird is the same and remains undiminished. We cannot form an adequate idea of the joy of birds. **Beyond our sense's bars**—beyond the range of our hearing. **They drink light**—the poet has already compared the dawn to a stream in which the bird are imagined to be floating. Now they drink that light which is fresh and pure and the rays of which are first to fall on them and not on any other object of the world. **And in it fade like stars**—the larks are lost to view in the bright sky like stars which become invisible at dawn. **The dew-like spirit of morning**—the larks are called the spirits of morning and compared to dew. Shelley also called his skylark "Hail to thee blithe Spirit ! Bird thou never wert . . ." and also "like an unbodied joy". The birds are called spirits because to the poet's imagination they are the vital force or animation of the morning. The comparison with dew suggests not only purity and excellence but also the 'volatile' quality of the birds as they become invisible. This half-line is highly suggestive. **They have gone past up-lifted eyes**—now it is not possible to see them as they have gone beyond the range of our vision.

Explanation. The poet calls the attention of men who were asked to watch the flights of the larks and hear songs. He points out that the music has now become inaudible because the birds have flown very high. We may not be able to hear the sound but there is no doubt that ecstasy of the birds is as intense as before they attained that height. The poet imagines the larks, which are dewlike spirits of morning, to be taking draughts of light to their heart's content and then fade away like stars in the sky. Now men cannot see them as they are lost to view.

Stanza 9. Between two lamps suspended—man's soul is imagined to have been placed between two lights of Life and Death. **Sun-marshalled**—our life is regulated and arranged by the sun. He gives us heat, vital force and energy and regulates our time in life. **Moon-tended**—the moon being cold and pale is associated here with the idea of death and is imagined that she direct us to our death or end in life. **Man's swift life**—our soul is ultimately to be removed from this world of the living. **It hath transcended**—our soul exists even after our life terminates. **Still on a breath**—the soul is imagined to ride on breath in its journey. **To day**—when the feelings of pessimism are overcome and we are buoyant with hope. **We too are the winged songs of the morning**—we are also inspired by new hopes and our hearts are stirred and we see visions of glory and translate them in our songs. **To-day we will arise**—this is the message of hope for mankind.

Explanation. The poet imagines the human soul as suspended between two lights of life and death—regulated and controlled by the life-giving warm sun and death-giving cold moon respectively. Man's soul in its journey is being borne on his breath and it transcends life and continues to exist even after life has become extinct. Like the larks the poet says that we are also inspired by nobler impulses and generous sentiments for improving the lot of mankind. We also see the glorious visions which future has in store for us and we translate them in our songs.

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